VISIT…

THE NEW GERMAN CINEMA

CARYL FLINN

MUSIC, HISTORY, AND THE MATTER OF STYLE

The New German Cinema

Caruso and Bernhardt perform Verdi in Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo* (staged by Werner Schroeter)

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Music, History, and the Matter of Style

CARYL FLINN

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Introduction

"Strategies of Remembrance"

Style is not simply window-dressing draped over a script; it is the very flesh of the work.

— DAVID BORDWELL

The relationship between history and film style and music is a long and uneven one. It tends to heat up when exaggerated, nonverisimilitudinous forms are used with "serious" or sensitive subject matter. Critics found *One Day in September* (McDonald, 1999), the recent documentary on the Black September terrorists who disrupted the 1972 Munich Olympics, too "MTV-like" in its sensationalized display of the victims, its flashy editing, and hard rock score. Putting aside its judgment of the film, this critique presumes that an "appropriate" form of music and style existed for the film, but was not selected. It also implies that music and style *do* something to history, and that whatever that is, it is bad. The present study, by contrast, maintains that memory and history do not exist *without* style, which I see as a constitutive feature of all forms of representation. But what are the links between them? How does one form of remembrance become more readily stylized than another? How do music and style connect—or disconnect—past and present? How do they prompt filmgoers to engage with the past, and with the experiences of others?

In recent decades, filmmakers, scholars, and filmgoers have all become increasingly aware of the importance of style—and music, thanks in part *to* music television channels like MTV—in the cinema, and in visual culture more generally. Today, countries around the world produce films that are awash in self-conscious style, dominated by special effects and computer-generated imagery. We have ironic eye-winking references to other films; action and artifice go hand in hand; camp has gone mainstream. Cin-

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ema's very definitional boundaries are blurring as film intersects with digital culture, which in turn has provided new distribution and exhibition venues, as well as new forms and patterns of consumption. This kind of formal self-awareness, moreover, occurs at a time scholars characterize as the "end of history," one conceptualized as just so many competing surfaces or one replaced altogether by desultory, nostalgic yearning. Given that context, the relationship among history, memory, and style remains as critical—and as vexed—as ever.

Nowhere has that relationship been more forcefully explored than in the New German Cinema of the mid-1960s through the 1980s. Even today, the New German Cinema has become as renowned for its formal and stylistic inventions as for its "working through" (*Aufarbeitung*) or "coming to terms with the past" (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*).[1] It is the aim of this study to explore the connections among these stylistic and historical concerns. Even abstract elements like music, I argue, participate in the process.

How does music do this? One example can be gleaned from Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet's pioneering *Chronik der Anna Magdalena Bach* / *Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach* (1967). Loosely organized around biographical events of the composer's life, the film features his widow reading material culled from various historical documents, including texts of his cantatas. The film's discontinuous form has led more than one critic to note that "musical structures suggest the form of the film rather than being subordinate to it."[2] But what may seem a simple foregrounding of musical form has historiographic implications as well. In the film, Bach's music is performed on period Baroque instruments, not a common practice in the mid-1960s. That choice insisted on a concrete historical context for a figure whom, as Theodor Adorno argued at the time, Germans had transformed into an ahistorical myth of German nationality. Bach had become museumized, his music confined to the rarefied realm of concert halls. Certainly film theatres were not the place to hear him, as Straub and Huillet learned while trying to get *Chronicle* produced and distributed. Their use of Bach, then, was not just historically appropriate to the film, but helped criticize the contemporary deification that Adorno observed.

Music in other films of the fledgling German movement showed similar sensitivity. The composite score that soon became a staple in the New German Cinema pillaged freely from existing music, sometimes mixing it with originally scored music, creating odd cultural and historical hybrids in the process. Fassbinder's 1972 *Die bitteren Tränen der Petra von Kant* / *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*, for instance, features Giuseppi Verdi and the Platters back to back; *Fitzcarraldo* (Herzog, 1981) uses Verdi's "Ernani," Bellini's "I Puritani," traditional native music from Peru,

and Popol Vuh, the experimental pop group that has been Herzog's collaborator throughout his career. Such scores are best characterized as having a profound sense of aesthetic impurity. Musical citations are made in such exaggerated ways that they generate the impression of inculcated, clichéd codes rather than articulations of character emotions, diegetic context, or ambient mood. In a sense, they repudiate the notion of presenting anything original or authentic at all. Any originality emerges from the music having been deracinated and placed into a new context. In Kluge's *Die Artisten in der Zirkuskuppel: Ratlos* / *Artists at the Big Top* (1968), for instance, a Spanish-language performance of the Beatles' "Yesterday" is played while we watch documentary footage of the 1939 festivities for "German Art Day" in Munich. This cross-cultural and cross-historical mix doesn't simply comment on the endurance of "yesterday" in the present or expose nostalgia (although it does these things), for it shows how the images of Nazism and the music of the Beatles circulate in a transnational arena where popular sounds and images are produced, transmitted, exchanged, reworked. Questions of music, politics, nation, and identity become inextricably linked.

Of course, combination scores are hardly a counterhegemonic practice. In post–New German Cinema films, like Wenders's *Bis ans Ende der Welt* / *Until the End of the World* (1991), mixed-source soundtracks, particularly with popular music, are almost de rigueur, part of a high-concept promotion that maximizes profit through tie-in CD sales targeting specific consumer groups. Thus simply combining different forms of existing music does not constitute an alternative film scoring practice. In fact, writing in the early 1990s, Thomas Karban held the New German Cinema responsible for Germany's lack of an active film music tradition, scolding Kluge and Achternbush in particular for using preexisting music over the services of a hired composer.[3]

Original composers may have been underemployed by the New German Cinema—its few stars include Peer Raben, Jürgen Knieper, and Claus Bantzer—but, as Joseph Straus has argued about early-twentieth-century modernist composers, even newly composed music takes into account traditions, techniques, and activities of its precursors. Straus dubs that relationship one of a productive "anxiety of influence." Certainly without that historical dimension, terms like "neoclassicism" would otherwise be quite meaningless.[4] The newly composed scores for the New German Cinema often worked in this way, not just as collagistic grab bags of existing pieces, but with composers modifying earlier forms, styles, and precepts. Peer Raben, who worked for directors like Fassbinder, van Ackeren, and Ottinger, incorporated his original compositions into a complex mix with

other musical forms. Jürgen Knieper's elaborate soundtrack for *Deutschland, bleiche Mutter* / *Germany, Pale Mother* (Sanders-Brahms, 1979) had the sounds of air raids and radio transmissions puncturing domestic settings at key emotional moments, as if commandeering music's usual role. For instance, the sirens and strikes of an air raid accompany the birth of Anna, not sentimental string instruments. Thus even the newly scored music that Karban claims the movement underutilized offers less an original production than a critical response to earlier forms and functions. Raben's work for Fassbinder would go so far as to alter or even damage standard musical structure and form, changing rhythmic patterns and accentuation in waltzes, for instance, or performing pieces on out-of-tune instruments. His scores for the director's melodramatic cycle violated generic expectations by refusing the wall-to-wall, saturated scores of Frank Skinner's work for Douglas Sirk. *Angst essen Seele auf* / *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974), Fassbinder's "remake" of *All That Heaven Allows* (1955), for instance, contains less than ten minutes of original material. What little we hear appears in brief, unresolved theme fragments.

The New German Cinema's juxtaposition of different musical forms within a single soundtrack, not to mention their constant interruption, fragmentation, and distortion, works against what many describe as classical cinematic scoring procedures. Wagner's "unending melody" simply fails to describe this practice, whatever its influence on Hollywood composers may have been. Similarly, the New German Cinema stripped music of the distracting, narcotizing effects Adorno claimed it had by refusing any function of unity and plenitude. Fragmentation made music obvious, interruptive, noticeable. These kinds of musical practices, I believe, intimate a suspicion of unity or origins perfectly in keeping with the New German Cinema's larger attempts to complicate a notion of history that would pass itself off as seamless, with the present neatly and unproblematically detached from its past.

Perhaps more contentious is my argument that this same kind of historiographic exploration can be conducted by degraded, superficial, or inappropriate aesthetic styles like camp, whose alleged inappropriateness is partly a heterosexist reaction against the gay and lesbian cultures from which it historically emerged. Given that camp has been theorized on more than one occasion as a way to recontextualize outmoded objects or ideas that have outlived their usefulness, it is clear that it involves *some* relationship with the historical past. An example may be found in Werner Schroeter's *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* / *The Death of Maria Malibran* (1971). Recordings of Maria Callas and Janis Joplin voice the early-nineteenth-century singer, showing how the production of diva and fan cul-

tures continues, with new forms of distribution, consumption, and even types of music, over 150 years. So if, as critics contend, camp strips artifacts of their initial functions or ironizes them, it still cannot come into being without them—or without history. Moreover, camp's edgy recontextualization of "used-up," neglected artifacts—and its self-conscious reinterpretation of them—is not, in the end, altogether different from the less flamboyant process of Walter Benjamin's allegorical readings or what Kluge advocates in his hermeneutics of connection-making, or *Zusammenhänge.*

At first glance, kitsch seems an even less likely candidate to approach so serious a topic as history, and especially a history as catastrophic as modern Germany's. Book-length polemics have even been written specifically against kitsch's appropriation of Nazism (see, for instance, Saul Friedlander, who claims that kitsch digests history). While I do not want to discredit such interventions—the inexplicable popularity of *Life Is Beautiful* (Benigni, 1998) dramatizes how offensively kitsch can orchestrate depictions of the Shoah—I contend that certain deployments offer sensitive relationships to history, working through it rather than against it. But observers of kitsch—detractors as well as proponents—tend to place kitsch "outside" historical systems and cultural and economic respectability, either to deride or champion the term. In aesthetics, it is not even "failed art" but, as Tomas Kulka argues, a form of "anti-art."[5] I believe that filmmakers like Schroeter reject that perspective, using kitsch and the undesirable pasts and alterities it might represent in order to embrace them. His work dramatizes how a variety of audiences—not simply white, heterosexual German men of the postwar period—can begin that work.

With its focus on music and style, the present study may appear to follow some of the precepts of kitsch; its camp element may come from exploring a film movement many consider either overstudied or passé (more on this below). But let us start with the movement itself: the New German Cinema appeared on the scene at a time when cinema scholars were deeply influenced by French, British, and North and South American calls for radical film form, for "excess." In the next chapter, I examine how scholars in the 1980s drew connections between "excessive" style and purported ideological excesses in cinematic melodramas. While that understanding of melodrama (i.e., as always already excessive) has been rightfully challenged since then (as has the equation of formal extravagance with ideological subterfuge), its influence on the New German Cinema was considerable, if tacit. The movement was repeatedly described in terms of excesses of one kind or another. There are its highly artificial sets (*Querelle* [Fassbinder, 1982]); two-dimensional performance and nonpsychologized

characters (*Der Starke Ferdinand* / *Strongman Ferdinand* [Kluge, 1976]); excesses of length (*Heimat* [Reitz, 1984]) and form (*Geschichtsunterricht* / *History Lessons* [Straub/Huillet, 1972]); and the purportedly aberrant sexualities in films like *Freak Orlando* (Ottinger, 1981). Self-consciously used music exists at every turn, from the damaged Bach and Beethoven fragments in Farocki's *Bildnes der Welt* / *Images of the World* (1988) to Syberberg's flamboyant *Requiem für einen jungfräulichen König* / *Ludwig: Requiem for a Virgin King* (1972), which opens with *Das Rheingold,* closes with *Götterdämmerung,* and borrows from *Tristan und Isolde* in the middle.

At the same time, it would be impossible to characterize the entirety of the New German Cinema's output as heavily stylized. As scholars repeatedly attest, the movement was notoriously disunified, not just aesthetically, but generationally, politically, and geographically. At the beginning, the Young German Cinema tended to prefer documentary modalities to fictional ones, upholding the tradition of other postwar cinema movements from Italian Neorealism to the heavily mediatized Dogme 95 of Denmark, which advocated pared-down cinematic forms and minimal technical intervention. The Young German Cinema in the West even discouraged the use of music, something partly explained by limited financial resources—music rights are notoriously expensive to procure, and lining up musicians to perform or compose new works is also very costly. But there were other reasons why attention to style, decor, post-production work, special effects—and music—was considered suspect: these items aligned with both the German *Papaskino*[6] and the Hollywood model against which the young German movement rallied so vigorously.

By the time that the Young German Cinema was redubbed the New German Cinema by New York critics in the 1970s, that bias toward pared-down and documentary forms had been rendered more pliable, if not altogether moot. This may have been a consequence of the maturing of the movement or the rising international marketability of its nondocumentary features, as in Schlöndorff's *Die Blechtrommel* / *The Tin Drum* (1979), Helke Sander's *Redupers* (1977), and Fassbinder's *Petra von Kant,* all self-consciously styled films lauded for their formal innovation. The career path of Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, one of the movement's senior directors, is worth noting in this regard. Widely received as one of its more extravagant stylists, Syberberg never abandoned documentary form. As a teenager in the 1950s, his first amateur films were straightforward 8-mm recordings of the ill-fated Brechtian production of *Faustus* in East Berlin. Well into his most productive (and stylized) period in the 1970s, Syberberg continued with extraordinary documentaries such as *Winifred Wagner* / *The Confes-*

sions of Winifred Wagner (1975). For five hours, Wagner's daughter-in-law, the head of Bayreuth from 1930 to 1945, is allowed to "speak for herself" in an astonishing discourse that is less a confession, as the English title indicates, than an avowal of her unrepentant affection for Hitler. On the basis of sheer length, the film strains conventional understandings about documentary's formal restraint and seems an apt counterpart to Frau Wagner's off-kilter worldview. Syberberg's directorial excesses reached an apotheosis of sorts in his stagy seven-hour "production," *Hitler: Ein Film aus Deutschland* / *Our Hitler* (1977), a film which, while attacked for many things, has never been reproached for stylistic temerity.

By no means was the softening of the movement's initial polemic against stylized uses of film form uncontested or even planned, as debates surrounding the release of Syberberg's film, Sanders-Brahms's *Germany, Pale Mother,* and Ottinger's *Madame X* (1977) all make clear. Diverse as it always was, the New German Cinema never had any unifying aesthetic strategies or other ambitions, thus straining the definitions of what a film movement is. At the same time, it would be erroneous to maintain that it has entered into history as a movement of little stylistic experimentation or of blind faith in authentic, verisimilitudinous styles, even in its documentary output. Significantly, its movements into style were often practiced at the hands of its more socially critical, provocative directors. Fassbinder and Costard, for instance, never hesitated to put their own experiences, bodies, and desires into extravagant, politicized mise-en-scènes, like Fassbinder's sequence in *Deutschland im Herbst* / *Germany in Autumn* (1978) or Costard's contemporaneous *Der Kleine Godard* / *Little Godard* (1979). Kluge manipulated conventions of objective reportage and analysis, interspersing interviews, statistics, manuals, legal documents, and documentary-style stories with photographs, drawings, film clips, and other texts into loosely constructed diegetic worlds. For him, these manipulable items and transitory functions were pivotal, and his film, video, and written output tried to articulate alternatives in aesthetic, intellectual, social, and political organization. Farocki recycled found footage into new contexts, using film he had shot for other purposes or projects. In *Ihre Zeitungen* (1967/8), for example, he intercuts the bombing of Vietnam with the tossing of tied piles of a conservative daily paper in Berlin. Sander's *Redupers* inserts reflexive intertexts to depict feminist activism, and Rosa von Praunheim deploys the antiverisimilitudinous aesthetics of camp in his gay activist films. Style in the New German Cinema thus worked less to *serve* a story than to be *part* of it. As Thomas Elsaesser remarked about Farocki and Sander, images became "documents" or material objects not necessarily coincident with human vision.[7] Presentation superceded repre-

sentation—an idea that can be equally applied to the soundtrack, with its fissures among music/sounds, source, and listener and its refusal to be handmaiden to character, story, or auditor.

Anglo-American and other film theorists at the time largely shared the movement's politically motivated suspicion of image and cinematic production, a fact that I believe accounts for much of the New German Cinema's initial popularity among scholars and teachers. At the time, psychoanalytic, Marxist, and materialist analysis dominated film's theoretical landscape, methodologies that were used alongside semiotics and poststructuralist criticism. Brecht, Vertov, Barthes, and Lacan were brought in to interrogate issues of cinematic signification, spectatorship, the materiality and materialism of film production, and the relationship of film style to ideology. In this light it is hardly surprising that the New German Cinema would prove so interesting.

So crucial was the matter of film form and style in this period that, as Comolli and Narboni polemicized in "Criticism/Ideology/Criticism," they not only constituted film content but also were believed to have the power to transform it ideologically. The self-conscious style of Bergman's *Persona* (1966), they argued, converted a conventional bourgeois story ("signified content") into a progressive, critical text. In keeping with the spirit of this influential piece, cinema scholars focused on concepts such as textual reflexivity (or self-reflexivity, as it was known), open and readerly texts, formal and/or ideological excess, baring the apparatus, and revived modernist concepts like Russian formalism's *ostrananie* and Brecht's *Vefremdungseffekt*. The period's distrust of illusionism and verisimilitude was widespread; they were associated with the worst of bourgeois humanism and capitalist ideology.

In the early twenty-first century, we have come a long way from believing that form and style determine a text's ideological position. Years back, Dana Polan, Jane Feuer, and Barbara Klinger offered prescient critiques that maintained, contrary to Comolli and Narboni, that self-conscious style did *not* necessarily produce progressive texts—Polan examined Chuck Jones's "Duck Amuck"; Feuer, the backstage Hollywood musical; Klinger, horror films such as *The Hills Have Eyes* (Craven, 1977). Since the 1980s, mass media have been peppered with self-conscious techniques and effects: direct address, shots of cue-card holders and other agents of "the apparatus" used toward no political aim whatsoever. In the 1990s, films from *The Matrix* (Wachowski Bros., 1998) to *Lola Rennt* / *Run Lola Run* (Tykwer, 1998) hammered the nail in the coffin of the argument that would de facto link hyperbolized style with a progressive or radical agenda. Economic structures of production, distribution, and

exhibition have moved to ever more intricate transnational systems, and one would be hard pressed to find examples of any kind of "pure" filmmaking, be it in terms of politics, artistic/commercial categories, or nationality.

Reflexive style today is as much tied to product promotion and marketing as anything else. Often it is little more than a marker for hip cynicism, irony, or a baby boomer's nostalgia for previous commodity forms. This is not to say that style can no longer be politically engaged; indeed, a primary concern of this book is to revisit aspects of style that are engaged in sensitive historical and political inquiry. But the effects that style produces, ideological or otherwise, can be neither predicted nor assumed. Meaning is subject to both change and mediation, and textual form does not singlehandedly determine meaning. Film form simply provides a way for viewers to negotiate and interact with the shifting historical and interpretative contexts in which films are produced and consumed.

During its heyday, the New German Cinema intersected with a variety of theoretical contexts and frameworks—most notably, the notion of mourning work. Indeed, *Trauerarbeit* became the veritable latchkey with which to unlock German cultural production, both inside and outside of Germany. Although German culture had been associated with the concept of *Trauerarbeit* prior to the Shoah (see Benjamin on the roots of German tragedy), it was the twelve years of Nazism that provided the kernel for its extensive postwar mourning work. And as the country's first postwar film movement, the New German Cinema has been indelibly marked by filmmakers and commentators alike with themes of loss, guilt, paralysis, and grief.

Freud's 1915 "Mourning and Melancholia" provided the theoretical backbone to that mourning work, constituting mourning and melancholia as normal and neurotic responses to loss respectively (and masculinizing and feminizing them in the process, as Susan Linville and Julianni Schiesari have argued persuasively). Alexander and Margarethe Mitscherlich's famous 1966 study furthered the discourse by maintaining that contemporary, "fatherless" Germany was "unable to mourn" and work through its guilty past. Floundering about with no firm sense of identity, direction, or political leadership, Germany was, they argued, too attached to its former ideals (lost phantasmatic national unity, an authoritative leader) to move forward. The national psyche was unwilling to confront the realities of its complicity with National Socialism, and produced in its stead an enormous battery of symptoms that, in one extreme permutation, had Germans assuming the position of victim, rather than that of the ag-

gressor's associate. It was against this purported disability that the Young German Cinema began, and it is fitting that the release of *The Inability to Mourn* coincided with the movement's first big international successes, Schlöndorff's *Young Törless,* Ulrich Schamoni's *Es/It* (1966), Kluge's *Yesterday Girl,* and Straub/Huillet's *Nicht Versöhnt / Not Reconciled* (1966/7), showing the interconnected nature of intellectual, aesthetic, and political endeavors of the time. Along with their colleagues in literature, theatre, and the arts, these filmmakers began to confront the Shoah, the war, and postwar problems that their elders wanted to bury. As scholars have emphasized, these directors had either been children during Hitler's Reich or were born soon after it. Their confrontations with the nation's past often assumed highly Oedipal dimensions,[8] and their search for residual fascism in contemporary Germany was particularly intense.

The idea of mourning work is arguably most self-consciously played out in the work of Syberberg, whose aesthetic, as Susan Sontag describes in relation to *Our Hitler,* is a bombastic mix of Brechtian deconstruction and Wagnerian synthesis. Its sets are strewn with what Elsaesser calls "the kitschy clutter of social and cultural memento," puppets, scraps of celluloid, with Richard Wagner's big sculpted head overseeing everything. This, of course, is completely deliberate, "staged" in the fullest sense of the term. Near the end of the film, Andre Heller speaks to the Hitler puppet at length: "You killed the Wandering Jew. You destroyed Berlin, Vienna. . . . You took away our sunsets, sunsets by Caspar David Friedrich. . . . You made old Germany kitschy with your simplifying works and peasant pictures." He even goes on to blame Adolf Hitler for fast food (remarkably, in a film whose score is saturated with heavyweights like Wagner, Beethoven, and Mahler, Heller's list fails to include music). Acutely aware of the labor of mourning and of his own investment in it, Syberberg closes his less melancholic *Winifred Wagner* with: "This film is part of Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's *Trauerarbeit.*"

For as influential as Freud's and the Mitscherlichs' model has been for producers and consumers of the New German Cinema, its implications for film style have remained rather underexamined. Eric Santner began to spell them out in *Stranded Objects,* his compelling study of postwar mourning and the New German Cinema. Describing both psychic process and stylistic strategy, he writes that postwar German cinema "cut[s] and . . . shap[es] . . . organic material . . . to empower the mourner to survive his or her loss," a process extensively elaborated in the Syberberg film, to which he devotes a full chapter.[9] Santner argues that such "stranded objects" play significant roles in the process of homeopathic recovery, his model for how present-day (male, white, German) subjects might enter into relationships with the his-

torical past and memory. He begins by describing homeopathy as a medical treatment, in which incremental doses of whatever is afflicting the body, such as poison, illness, or allergy, are taken in order to cure it. Cast in psychoanalytic terms, the process describes how subjects, often with the help of external props, introject small, controlled doses of unpleasurable experiences to have the illusion of "mastering" them, as in, for instance, Freud's description of the *fort/da* game. As Santner notes, that process is repeated continually throughout subjectivity. He goes on to extend these principles to the New German Cinema, which he considers as a series of cultural stages on which a wider social and historical psyche could elaborate or perform the homeopathic process of coming to grips with an extraordinarily poisonous past. With this theory, Santner posits an alternative to the model of mourning work, and I will be developing that and other alternatives over the course of this book.

One of the aims of this study, then, is to modify the model of mourning that has stuck to the Young German Cinema like glue. The intention is not to downplay the importance of longing or loss in our encounters with film style, music, or historical representation, but to suggest that the critical models of the inability to mourn and *Trauerarbeit*, while once enormously important, have outlived their use value. As Elsaesser recently observed, "Germany, no longer disavowing fascism, Auschwitz, or its role in the disasters of the twentieth century, is simply adding their representations to its national heritage in order to move on" (note that he does not say move *past*).[10] Social, economic, and political exigencies have changed since the demise of the movement. "The changing balance of forces in Europe," Elsaesser continues, "has brought Germany not only out of its political quarantine, but has also put an end to the morose, yet often enough self-lacerateingly honest introspection which was one of Fassbinder's contributions to his country's cinema and—at the time—a reason for his reputation as a creative force."[11] Today, domestic German film production is up: genre pictures like action films and comedies are popular; younger viewers are even less attracted by the "self-lacerating" historical questions posed by the New German Cinema than its initial audience. Thus, in spite of its historical importance, there is no compelling reason to preserve the model of mourning as *the* master exegetic tool for discussing the Young German Cinema or its approach to the past. In fact, its use needs to be revisited, since it upheld problematic assumptions about sexual, national, and ethnic identities and other forms of differentiated subjects and their histories.

Some of the most influential work on the New German Cinema, and particularly on Fassbinder, focuses on vision, specularity, and the look (see, for

instance, Elsaesser, Mayne, and Silverman). Timothy Corrigan argues that the movement proffered a "displaced image" mediated by outside textual and national influences. It is not an unjustified emphasis: visually lavish films like Fassbinder's *Chinesisches Roulette* / *Chinese Roulette* (1976) and *Eine Reise ins Licht* / *Despair* (1978) or Ottinger's *Bildnis einer Trinkerin* / *Ticket of No Return* (1979) and *Madame X* all feature elaborate framing devices, windows, mirrors, shimmering surfaces, splits in vision, splits in characters—offering a stunning retreat from film theory's long-standing equation of looking with power, mastery, and knowledge. Elsaesser connects this willed disempowerment, particularly in Fassbinder's case, to Germany's historical experience during and after the war, when identity was monitored by a succession of powerful Others; for Kaja Silverman, Fassbinder's visual strategies manifest a willed relinquishment of conventional phallic authority. Whether in terms of the films' actual look or the human looks and gazes that they elicit, vision becomes the means by which German culture's assorted divestitures are discussed and articulated. Directors like Schroeter and Syberberg have been singled out as "operatic," to be sure, and critics have discussed Straub/Huillet's sophisticated use of music, but these remain exceptions rather than the rule.[12]

This study proposes that music and other aspects of film style work as much as the image to address notions of history, loss, and identity. For a film movement emerging from Germany—traditionally the center of western art music—this is not an extravagant claim. (We need only further consider music's relationship to nationalist and colonialist sensibilities over the last centuries.) What I want to examine is a question at once subjective and political: how do the soundtracks of the New German Cinema dramatize a commitment to historical memory that is largely uninvolved with sentimental or romanticized mourning or nationalistic fervor? A few reconfirm the model, as the brief remarks from Syberberg already suggest, but given the number of directors using music in critical ways, music is well positioned to make listeners formulate questions concerning history, grief, and memory work.

Walter Benjamin famously wrote that historiography entails explosion, urging the historical materialist to "blast a specific era out of the homogeneous course of history."[13] Blasts, of course, turn unity into fragments, a key component of his concept of allegorical reading, as we shall see. Underscoring his warnings against being absorbed by the official interests of "historicism," with its "universal history" and other fictions, Benjamin preferred the lived moments of smaller, unwritten, unacknowledged counterhistories. We find a number of historiographic explosions musically

dramatized in three films of the 1970s and 1980s, all of which feature portions of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Two of these films participate in the kinds of historiographic strategies under discussion here; the third is offered as a counterexample that elaborates a more nostalgic, sentimental approach to history and reminiscence.

Fassbinder's *Der Ehe der Maria Braun* / *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979) most dramatically literalizes the blast of which Benjamin speaks. The first shot of the film, a photo of Hitler, falls forward, as if blasted out of the frame by the Allied attack on Berlin, during the civil marriage of Maria and Herrmann Braun. We hear the Adagio of Beethoven's last symphony amid the explosions that rip the place apart.

Beethoven's Ninth is used for even more bombastic effect near the end of *Hitler.* Here an off-frame, nondiegetic chorus sings Schiller's "Ode to Joy," the symphony's famous finale. It accompanies a lone figure in the frame, a child wrapped in strips of film. This girl/muse/symbol of hope is no less than Cinema itself, for Syberberg the *Gesamtkunstwerk* of the twentieth century. Transcendence is in the air.

A humbler quotation of the Ninth Symphony's chorus appears in Kluge's *Die Patriotin* / *The Patriot* (1979), in which history teacher Gabi Teichert and her female friends sit around in her apartment kitchen drinking one holiday evening. They are trying to figure out the words as the last movement of the piece is transmitted in the background.

The Patriot, Hitler, and *Maria Braun* all treat Beethoven's renowned symphony as an acoustic icon of official German culture. Such a function is entirely unsurprising. The chorale alone perfectly illustrates the fetishization of canonical excerpts and the institutionalization of Western music's greatest hits that Horkheimer and Adorno condemned in their assault on the Culture Industry. Yet each film intimates a different relationship to the national culture that Beethoven's finale metonymically presents. *The Patriot* highlights the impartial and fragmented nature of the excerpt. If the piece constitutes a portion of the "patriotic image" Gabi seeks from German history, it is decidedly not a romantic one—indeed, the film treats her quest for positive German images with considerable irony. Furthermore, it is clear that the Ninth Symphony's Germanic patriotism (or more accurately, the nationalism it elicits) is at best illusory, a tired cultural crutch. With her female friends, Gabi sings while drinking schnapps in her small kitchen. The performance of the music is completely deprofessionalized. What we get resembles a drunken reading of Schiller, performed to scratched, prerecorded accompaniment.

Kluge chips away at Beethoven's nineteenth-century master text rather than reproducing it whole—much as Benjamin had recommended combat-

Gabi Teichert and her friends decipher Schiller's text to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in Kluge's *The Patriot*

ing the lethal sanctimoniousness of official history. In so doing, Kluge also chips away at musical institutions, which he maintains similarly institutionalize the feelings and desires of historical subjects. In *Die Macht der Gefühle* / *The Power of Emotion* (1983), for example, he refers to the opera house as the "power plant of emotions," observing how industry capitalizes on something so nominally private and uncontrollable as human feeling. This "power plant" overprocesses emotions to such an extent that they become too inflated, too out of touch for actual consumption or use.

Syberberg's attitude toward operatic desire is altogether different from Kluge's "militant mistrust" of it, as Miriam Hansen describes it.[14] In *Hitler,* music functions as a redemptive force, an aesthetic and national(ist) touchstone sullied by Hitler, reiterating the point made in Heller's monologue. Whereas in Kluge's work, music—even sacred cows such as Beethoven's Ninth Symphony—is used intermittently, as a series of interruptions, for Syberberg it is precisely *history* that interrupts *music* and the cultural continuity he believes it engenders. Music is positioned as an anchoring unity while everything around it falls to ruin: consider again the film's debris-strewn set, with Wagner's head observing everything from its toppled position on the floor. While the detritus of history and "Hitler" seems to have damaged the composer, there is a stronger sense in

Syberberg's Artwork of the Future in *Our Hitler.* Courtesy of the Kobal Collection.

which the film establishes Wagner—along with other titans of Germanic high culture—as down but not out. One senses that, once resurrected, German art will have the capacity itself to resurrect, as intimated by the pristine recording of the chorus of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in *Hitler.*

It is no accident that the finale of the Ninth appears at *Hitler*'s conclusion, respectfully miming its place in Beethoven's own symphony. It follows Heller's long monologue, which itself closed on the final chorus the Second "Resurrection" Symphony by Mahler—a composer who for some gave German romanticism its grandiose last gasp—and had opened with Haydn's string quartet, the second movement of which would eventually provide the melody for the "Deutschlandlied."[15] Placing Beethoven in such a freighted historical frame, Syberberg offers the symphonic finale as a sign of hope for postwar German culture, an interpretation even more overdetermined by the inclusion of his own daughter as the young avatar of tomorrow. Filled with utopian yearning—Jameson calls Ernst Bloch "Syberberg's philosophical mentor"[16]—Syberberg's sense of the future is decidedly backward-looking, an ironically tinged nostalgia for the phantasmatic, unified national culture Hitler purportedly made impossible: an irrecoverable grail, in short. Despite the aesthetics of fragmentation that dominates the text, his film seems to long for the fictions of national co-

Destruction, music, and marriage at the beginning of Fassbinder's *The Marriage of Maria Braun*. Courtesy of Albatros Produktion/RGA.

herence, for romanticism's excesses and fantasies, along with its aesthetic heights and sense of isolated genius. As Elsaesser writes in an early critique, "The idea of a split tearing the universe, with which the film opens . . . points to the manifold divisions of German history in search of its Grail—the negative mythology of unity, redemption and reconciliation. Because these visions . . . imply desires of regression, self-oblivion and fantasies of the narcissistic ego, it is Melancholia and Narcissus as patron saints . . . calling for 'mourning work.' "[17] There is no question about the intensity of Syberberg's *Trauerarbeit*, and in him, critics can find their ideal, anguished, if kitschy, German mourner.

None of these things is apparent in the Ninth Symphony's brief appearance at the beginning of Fassbinder's *Maria Braun*. There it appears mixed with enough other sounds so as to be very nearly drowned out entirely. Evoked from the past but coincident with bombs, fire, screaming, and destruction, the barely audible masterpiece suggests at best a certain impotence, an inability to help or matter, and, at worst, a complicity with the more destructive aspects of western progress.[18] Certainly its status as masterpiece recedes amid the chaotic soundtrack, and even the film's credits are complicated and difficult to read. Significantly, Fassbinder selected not the triumphant finale but the third movement, which Susan McClary de-

scribes as a "negative image" to the first two "monomaniacal movements." To McClary, its gentleness suggests "arcadian recollection, the imaginary sublime, or a dream of utopia . . . [although] it can never be a reality."[19] Here, however, even that tranquil "arcadian" potential is completely shot apart by the military destruction depicted alongside it.

In *Maria Braun*, the new musical context is so cluttered—literally, with debris from the bombing—that the purity or integrity of Beethoven's work cannot remain intact, or its meanings unaltered. The piece continues uninterrupted into the following scene at Maria's apartment with her mother, which takes place some time later: Herrmann Braun does not return from the war and Maria contemplates selling her wedding dress for needed cash. The Beethoven is even quieter here, barely discernable as it is heard on a radio—suddenly diegetic. The announcer whispers, "That was Beethoven's Ninth Symphony," and then reads a list of missing German soldiers, clinching the piece's connection to death. The substantial temporal shift between the two scenes falsifies the acoustic continuity that the music might have conferred, intimating that its ability to unify in other regards—say, as a token of national culture—is equally counterfeit.

Maria Braun, *The Patriot*, and *Hitler* all deploy Beethoven's famous symphony as an icon of high German culture, a cherished relic of national public relations. Yet each responds differently to that function, with Kluge using music to rework it, Fassbinder to assail it, and Syberberg, in a very real way, to redeem it.

The films discussed in this book often draw attention to the physical nature of their soundtracks. Recordings are scratched up or damaged, music is played on out-of-tune instruments, familiar works are dissected into unrecognizable morsels, and so on. Other aspects of film form are similarly materialized, again forcing us to abandon the idea that cinematic style is so much superfluous "dressing," to borrow Bordwell's phrase, or that music and style serve empty, hollow functions. And although the visual techniques of the movement (e.g., camera work, framing) have attracted considerable attention, I am concerned here with the use of props (and specifically, with human bodies as props).

Judith Butler's influential notion of performing identity offers one place to begin. For her, that identity is primarily gendered. In the 1990s, she focused on the repetitive acts through which identities are constantly done and undone, as against the belief that gendered/sexual identities are innate properties, contained by biological bodies. Much of that argument is germane to the ways in which history and national identities are articulated (in fact, such projects are not separate from the issue of gender). Freud

even suggests as much in his "Ratman" case. Describing the narrative by which individual identity is constructed, he calls it "a complicated process of remodeling, analogous in every way to the process by which a nation constructs legends about its early history,"[20] where recurring legends, symbols, and myths take precedence over the drier details that constitute history.

The New German Cinema often uses individual bodies/characters as metaphors for the national body at large; examples include *Germany, Pale Mother,* Schlöndorff's *The Tin Drum,* and Herzog's *Auch Zwerge haben klein angefangen / Even Dwarves Start Small* (1970). Bodies are crisscrossed by the marks of social, historical, and economic circumstance in brutally literal ways: racism becomes stomach ulcers in *Angst*; Bruno Ganz gets a "knife in the head" for arriving at a leftist political office at the wrong time in *Messer im Kopf / Knife in the Head* (Hauff, 1978). Those formations of wounded bodies are not, I believe, wholly dissimilar to the damaged music fragments of many soundtracks.

Indeed, the German cinema often constructs human bodies as little more than brute, physical objects, assisted by props that stylize or fragment them, like the rat-like features of Klaus Kinski's *Nosferatu* (Herzog, 1978) or the extracted teeth in *Germany, Pale Mother.* Rather than provide containers for psychologically plausible characters, bodies simply become amalgamations of objects (e.g., Hitler as puppet; Petra von Kant's wigs), or of body parts (e.g., teeth, knees) through which historical concerns are raised or played out. In the first group of films that this study examines, music, bodies, and other objects function as tabula rasa on which circumstance and history are brutally inscribed. The question raised by these depictions is: how can the subjects who reside in or who watch these bodies move forward with history with a sense of agency, of not being always already ruined or victimized by it? Some of the "queerer" films in the movement begin to formulate answers to this, and scholars like Alice Kuzniar, Bruce Williams, Marcia Klotz, and others have turned to them to address some of these concerns.

In an article on camp and the New German Cinema, for instance, Johannes von Moltke examines Hannah Schygulla's self-conscious, often campy acting style in Fassbinder films that had her body carry the metaphoric weight of representing West Germany, as in *Lili Marleen* (1980) and *Maria Braun.* Her denaturalized performance, he maintains, draws attention to its constructedness in addition to its ability to construct, much as Freud argued about a nation's penchant for myth-making legends over banal, factual accounts. Schygulla evinces a specifically German performativity on the basis of her relationship to Fassbinder alone, which was

often likened to that of Josef von Sternberg and his "Marlene," another camped-up national icon. Schygulla herself reports that one filmgoer informed her how much he enjoyed her performance as *Eva* Braun. Such hyperbolic references to German history defuse the possibility of a stable, retrievable point of historical or national origin: no fixed nation or history generates all these cinematic displacements and reenactments. This is not to deny the facticity of historical events, but to show the means by which a nation is truly an "imagined community." And Germany's particular history in the twentieth century had been so catastrophic as to unveil the obscured fictions by which the phantasmatic, mediatized communities of nation are normally maintained.

MUSIC, CAMP, AND STYLE

To examine how memory and historical circumstances can be approached through style and music, I carefully analyze various films associated with the New German Cinema and its immediate aftermath. The book is divided into three interrelated parts. Each chapter proposes a particular stylistic "strategy of remembrance" with different implications for approaching history, memory, and difference.

The first part of the book is entitled "Historical Predecessors: Melodrama and Modernism." There, in Chapter One, I explore the influence of Anglo-American melodramatic form on the New German Cinema. Although domestic melodramas influenced the movement significantly,[21] for the most part German critics and filmmakers at the time viewed the genre as a Hollywood import to be treated with suspicion. Curiously, contemporary film scholars outside Germany were preoccupied with classical melodramas—and were intensely studying the New German Cinema as well (some, like Thomas Elsaesser, were doing both). That important transatlantic connection between melodrama and the New German Cinema, and scholars' approach to melodrama during the late 1970s and 1980s, will be discussed in this section. During this period, scholars linked melodrama to a "magnificent obsession" with the past, filled as it was with circular stories and missed opportunities. Hollywood melodrama's often extravagant style was crucial for scholars, who lavished attention on the saturated colors and emotional outpourings in films by Sirk, Minnelli, or Ray, the nonnaturalistic performance styles of actors—flat and wooden, like George Brent or Rock Hudson or, at the other extreme, "hysterically" overreactive, like Joan Crawford or Robert Stack. And then there is the music, whose importance to the genre is significant enough to be definitionally constitutive of it.

These thematic and stylistic concerns have immediate relevance to the New German Cinema, and to Fassbinder in particular, whose admiration for Sirk is as well known as his "remake" of *All That Heaven Allows*. Chapter One addresses the ostensibly excessive means by which classical melodrama and the New German Cinema represent their pasts. It is here that I try to problematize the model of mourning that shapes so many readings of New German films. To do so, I consider melancholy, mourning's devalued companion strategy of dealing with loss, as a *non*pathological condition that not only describes with more accuracy the New German Cinema's strategies of remembrance, but that suggests alternatives to the once prevalent (and again, masculinist) model of a national inability to mourn. By depathologizing the process, one can consider how musical repetition (see "Sugarbaby," in Percy Adlon's *Zuckerbaby* [1985], or the more roundly condemned "Lili Marleen") *undoes* the notion of originality or Benjaminian aura, rather than running around in vicious circles.

Several chapters explore the influence of modernist aesthetics and texts on the New German Cinema. Chapter Two examines Peer Raben's original music for Fassbinder, his use of existing compositions, and his personal statements on film music. He advocates the concept of "Musik-Shock," invoking the discourse of shock so pivotal to European modernists before 1933, like Eisler, Brecht, Weill, and Eisenstein. In spite of his acknowledged debt to these predecessors, however, Raben's work, and his notion of shock, involve less a retrieval of modernist conceptions or practice than a reworking of them in the shadow of the Shoah and World War II. This is not to argue that Raben is a postmodernist, for ultimately he inhabits a nebulous gray zone between prewar modernism and postwar postmodernism, using and abusing elements of each.

Another figure prominent in the movement straddling that modernist/postmodernist divide was Alexander Kluge, to whom the book's second part, "Music and the Materials of History," is devoted. Like Raben, Kluge openly recognized modernism's influence on his work, using collage form to try to change perception itself, just as his predecessors had. Instead of shock (which Kluge maintained took too much *out* of the filmgoer's control), he focuses on banal, overlooked objects that official history neglects or leaves behind, much as Benjamin had argued before him. Kluge's attempts to reactivate recontextualized pieces are discussed in Chapters Three and Four, where I analyze his writings along with the films *The Patriot* and *The Power of Emotion*. *The Patriot* features a fictional history teacher who literally digs into frozen, resistant German soil for "better materials with which to teach." It asks: whom or what does history leave behind, buried? Who survives, and how does trauma affect representation

and memory? Which bodies articulate their own experiences and histories, and how can alternative "articulations" commence?

In *The Power of Emotion*, speech and survival turn to music. Here Kluge considers nineteenth-century tragic opera as the byproduct of an elaborate power plant that transforms the raw power of human feelings into fatal formulae. To challenge its immuring fictions of "inescapable tragedy" and to undermine the fate-driven narratives in which "unhappy feelings are worth more," Kluge blasts operas apart into so many manipulated fragments, as if cutting them down to size. For Kluge, part of opera's tragedy is its routine "undoing" of characters, the deaths of which opera subsequently turns into transcendent, sacred, even beautiful events—especially with female victims. In an observation strikingly resonant of Catherine Clément's contemporaneous *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, Kluge states: "In every opera that deals with redemption, a woman is sacrificed in Act 5," returning us via music to the question of which bodies survive and which get left behind. Kluge's interest in the "power" of emotions forces the questions of emotion, pleasure, and sensuality—issues often underexamined in the New German films dealing with historical remembrance in ostensibly more serious ways. The constant foregrounding of human bodies is, as Kluge's work dramatizes, a crucial component of New German Cinematic style.

For a film movement concerned with the effects of war, the frequent appearance of wounded, disfigured, or otherwise disabled bodies is unsurprising. Their intensely stylized depiction, however, seems typical of postwar German strategies. The final part of *The New German Cinema* attempts to undo the above "undoing" of these spectacularized bodies. In the two chapters that constitute "Queering History through Camp and Kitsch," I consider strategies of remembrance that treat the body as a divided site of different identities (and desires) within a fractured German identity, rather than as a means by which ruination is constantly measured. Fassbinder, for example, often yoked bodies to negativity, inertness, and passivity, which on the one hand suggest a form of cultural refusal and on the other raise real questions about agency and the possibility of change (*Der Händler der vier Jahreszeiten* / *The Merchant of Four Seasons* [1972], *Faustrecht der Freiheit* / *Fox and His Friends* [1974], *Mutter Küsters Fahrt zum Himmel* / *Mother Kusters Goes to Heaven* [1975]). By contrast, the queer bodies in Ulrike Ottinger and Monika Treut's films, every bit as inscribed by (often clichéd) forces of nation and sexual normativity, seem less fully confined by them. There is a greater sense of agency here, even if it is heavily circumscribed. Boundaries between German/non-German, heterosexual/

queer, victim/victimizer, and self/other are less clear-cut. For them and other directors like Rosa von Praunheim and Werner Schroeter, human figures perform cultural suffering *as well as* joyous escape; Schroeter in particular revels in that intensity and the "power of emotions." It is significant that these more pleasure-driven bodies prevail in work associated with lesbian, gay, and queer desires and aesthetics.

That said, queer practices cannot be separated from those of more mainstream directors, for queerness constitutes that mainstream, just as it shapes the heteronormativity it opposes. The openly out Fassbinder was arguably the movement's epicenter, for instance, and his frequently campy aesthetics were no furtive, marginal affair. In the same way, camp and kitsch also inform (if unintentionally) the work of nongay directors like Syberberg, Herzog, and Wim Wenders. Thus to insist on clearly separated inner and "out" spheres is problematic, just as opposing "male" to "female" aesthetics reifies rather than upsets categories. Queer, gay, and lesbian directors like Fassbinder, Schroeter, Ottinger, and others worked both in and outside the flexible parameters of the New German Cinema. Interestingly, with one exception,[22] none has been interested in being labeled gay, and all of them have been attacked at one point by lesbian and gay communities for their inappropriate treatment of nonheterosexual desires—that nagging question of style, once again. And given Germany's established history of gay and lesbian directors and stories (e.g., *Mädchen in Uniform* [Sagan, 1931], *Anders als Anderen / Different from the Rest* [Oswald, 1919]), gay cinema is hardly a closeted phenomenon, leading Alice Kuzniar to argue for the fundamental queerness of German film culture at large.

Chapter Five opens by examining Monika Treut's and Ulrike Ottinger's representations of female and other nonmale bodies as they bring fantasy, humor, and eroticism into explorations of postwar German identity. Treut's *Virgin Machine* and Ottinger's *Madame X* are particularly laden with playful artifice and transgression: their soundtracks are characterized by muted boundaries and instability. Even the films' titles suggest the constructed nature of female bodies and desire (mechanical on the one hand, melodramatic and anonymous on the other). These directors were extremely attuned to contemporary feminist debates in essentialism and realism in representing lesbian and other nonheterosexual female desires. Indeed, feminism and gender criticism provide key frameworks for these directors, now prominent figures within queer cinema. Their work engages queer, female-friendly, and desire-centered notions of identity more than most other German films of the 1970s and 1980s. At the same time, and as a strategy of remembrance, their perspectives have some disadvantages, especially when matters of class, race, and ethnic differences arise.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of the campy style of von Praunheim's *Anita: Tänze des Lasters* / *Anita: Dances of Vice* (1988) a fiction film based on the historical figure Anita Berber, a popular nude dancer in Weimar-era Berlin. It is a visually stunning text, yet the campiness of its soundtrack merits special focus, not the least for the fact that critics usually address camp as a visual or verbal phenomenon. My analysis explores how music, even in its abstract, "autonomous" forms, can participate in a historically savvy, queer aesthetic that draws connections between present and past situations.

As Chapter Six, "Introjecting Kitsch," demonstrates, kitsch is associated, even more resolutely than camp, with historically denigrated cultures. Linked to gay aesthetes, a vacuous petite bourgeoisie, the uneducated poor, Eurotrash, and white trash, it is also denigrated as an aesthetic form. This chapter proposes that the kitsch of Werner Schroeter's films, and *Der Bomberpilot* / *Bomber Pilot* (1971) in particular, shows a contrary spirit: an embrace of alterity that includes the unpleasant aspects of Germany's past. Despite the filmmaker's repeated assertions of being apolitical, his emphasis on kitsch's extremes are informed by a sophisticated network of social, political, and historical issues. Schroeter achieves this largely through a kitschy appropriation of opera and other forms of music. At the same time that he establishes the powerful allure of operatic desire, performance, and identifications, especially for women and gay men, Schroeter never shuns its "dangerous" and kitschy excesses, embracing what I will be exploring as the unwanted within the wanted.

Finally, a few remarks on what *The New German Cinema* is not. As is probably clear from my selection of films, it is not a survey. Nor is it meant to be comprehensive. I selected texts for their innovative use of music and style and for their emphasis on materiality, props, and bodies. There will be inevitable, often regrettable, omissions.[23] Secondly, although *The New German Cinema* is concerned with historical representation, it is not a "history of" the New German Cinema; many fine studies exist on the topic already. Instead, I focus on what music and style tell us *about* history, rather than delineating yet another history of the movement. Using detailed analyses, I situate films in different interpretive contexts and communities, like progressive German modernism of the 1920s that was revisited in the 1970s, Anglo-American melodrama theory of the 1980s, feminist debates on essentialism and realism, and contemporary queer camp and kitsch.

In so doing, I depart from a model of film history that would assess the texts first and foremost in terms of their immediate German reception. This is not to overlook the significance of these contexts but to explore the mean-

ings that subsequent reception situations also mobilize. (It is also to raise the question of what legitimates some contexts and not others.) I do not believe that original historical and geographical receptions possess exclusive exegetic rights on a text, especially in the case of a commodity form like film, with effectively global circulation and a life that extends decades beyond the moment of its production—and the New German Cinema in particular has had an extensive critical afterlife. As early as 1981, Eric Rentschler pointed out that there had always been a disjuncture between German and American receptions of the New German Cinema. Uncelebrated at home, the films were gleaned for literal references to current events (like terrorism), whereas their heavily mediatized reception in the United States garnered more interest in technique and new auteurs.[24] While Rentschler rightfully laments American receptions that ignored the processes behind the films' production, these "secondary" readings expose the kinds of dislocations and disjunctures that can help reconfigure historical work and shed light on the different interpretive perspectives brought to bear on cinematic texts. That sense of dislocation is further enhanced as "the New German Cinema" itself becomes a thing of the past. It is my hope that this study will suggest new ways of thinking not only about the movement, but about history and historical representation in film and film music.

Although it is not my intention to assert the primacy of one particular approach to or conception of history over another, it will be clear that I have my biases. Readers will find favorable references to historical materialism, for instance, and few to linear and teleologically driven accounts. Still, when dealing with events that include World War II and the Shoah, one has an obligation to spell out one's choices as clearly as possible, and having lived around the corner from a Holocaust-denier in Toronto, I respond to that duty with pleasure. While the Shoah doubtlessly presents a case "at the limits of representation," in Friedlander's phrase, even in its most pared-down forms, history (including that of the Shoah) requires the displacements and distance of style. Raul Hilberg acknowledges the implications of this in his memoirs: "To portray the Holocaust, Claude Lanzmann [director of *Shoah*] once said to me, one has to create a work of art. To recreate this event, be it on film or in a book, one must be a consummate artist, for such recreation is an act of creation in and of itself. . . . The artist usurps the actuality, substituting a text for a reality that is fast fading. The words that are thus written take the place of the past; these words, *rather than the events themselves*, will be remembered."[25]

To be sure, Hilberg romanticizes the historian's labor. Nevertheless he makes a number of important points: the past is accessible only through substitution; it is constructed by (rather than solely constitutive of) "his-

tory"; history itself is crafted from a variety of tools, props, styles, and artifacts. Despite the risks he takes in claiming that the "substitutions" remain in memory over and above the events in the Shoah to which they point, it is reasonable to consider them our only point of access today, even if the memory belongs to an actual survivor. The present study also maintains that no representational strategy is inherently inappropriate to approach that difficult history. Art Speigelman's *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* demonstrated that a low-brow, purportedly adolescent medium could powerfully depict historical events even of the Shoah's magnitude.[26] Its animated history of Jewish "mice" and Nazi "cats" was framed within a highly fraught story of father and son, a tension that, along with other subjective traumas, was formally enhanced through occasional appearances of photographs, violated image borders, disrupted temporal linearity, and, in the powerful sequence of the suicide of the author/protagonist's mother, an illustration style at complete odds from that of the rest of the book. Such details heighten rather than trivialize history's impact on us.

The present study understands history and memory as unstable, irretrievable phenomena—even and perhaps especially for history's participants and survivors. This is not the same as saying that the facts of history are contestable, whatever my former neighbor's beliefs. However factually real these events were, though, they are now consigned to the Real, making our access to them partial and putting them at several removes, growing increasingly distant with the passage of time. Rather than lament their cinematic displacements or resent how objects, music, or bodies are positioned as so many props, we might address these pieces as fragments of that Real, allegorical remnants that don't make a smooth link to a particular point in the past, but are rather in constant collision with other events. Kaja Silverman recently suggested they offered what she called, after Benjamin, "evidentiary objects," through which we might enter into dialogue with the inaccessible memories of others that they put into play.[27]

Finally, I select the word "Shoah" to describe what Hilberg simply and perhaps more compellingly calls "the destruction of the European Jews." My choice of terms may run the risk of a victim-based view of history. But I prefer the language of those most affected by its events over the heroicizing term "Holocaust" (from the Greek for burnt sacrifice and offerings) or the language of the oppressors and their obscene desire for a "Final Solution."

PART I

Historical Predecessors

Melodrama and Modernism

1 Mourning, Melancholia, and "New German Melodrama"

> What I like about Sirk is that he makes movies about things, not people.
>
> —R. W. FASSBINDER

MELODRAMA, MELANCHOLIA, AND CULTURAL THEFT

The airing of the U.S. miniseries "The Holocaust" on German television in 1977 was a milestone in the history of the New German Cinema. Enormously well received by a mass audience, its virtues were fiercely contested among intellectuals and filmmakers. Edgar Reitz opined that "the Americans have stolen our history"[1] and retaliated with an even longer family drama, *Heimat*. The first installment begins with a shot of a rock on which "Made in Germany" is written, emphasizing the homegrown, "authentic" nature of his work. Reviled though the American miniseries may have been among elite cultural producers, it nonetheless paved the way for films that put the war and postwar eras onto German screens: Kluge, Reitz's colleague, produced *The Patriot;* Fassbinder began his West German trilogy; Sanders-Brahms released *Germany, Pale Mother.* These were some of the films that attempted not only to reclaim a national history, but to reclaim it *from the Americans,* whose postwar influence on Germany was summarized in the frequently quoted line from Wim Wenders's 1976 *Im Lauf der Zeit* / *Kings of the Road:* "The Yanks have colonized our unconscious."

An intriguing part of the critique against "The Holocaust" was the implicit (and sometimes explicit) condemnation of the series' melodramatic aspects. As survivor Elie Wiesel wrote to the *New York Times,* the show "transform[ed] an ontological event into soap-opera."[2] Reduced to personal drama, it seemed to diminish that event to the sensationalized fate of

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one or two families. That domestic focus ostensibly prevented the series from addressing the Shoah or, worse, risked eliding it altogether. (Ironically, that criticism would later be levied against Reitz's own film.) In addition to the focus on everyday life, "The Holocaust" depicted the more sensationalistic aspects of the Shoah, such as the splitting apart of families and the brutal randomness of the "selections." In short, it was deemed at once too banal and too excessive—a common criticism of melodramatic form in general. Exploiting the affective excesses associated with the genre, "The Holocaust" also partook of the genre's sensationalism, its purported demurral from political and economic problems, and its polarization of good and evil, creating a diegetic world inhabited largely by historically vacant figures. All of which, the critics seemed to be saying, were inappropriate means to represent that darkest episode in modern history.

Part of that attack may have stemmed from the still-fresh memories of sensationalized tearjerkers sanctioned by Nazi authorities, like Sirk's Zarah Leander vehicles, such as *Zu neuen Ufern* / *To New Shores* or *La Habañera* (both 1937), or the *Papaskino* of Adenauer's 1950s, whose popular forms critics like Siegfried Kracauer condemned as the brainless progeny of Nazi cinema. The concern was that these older films, now widely seen on nighttime television, evoked a furtive nostalgia for Nazism itself; the feminist film journal *frauen und film,* for instance, devoted a special issue (no. 29) to Leander's ongoing cult status in 1981. Over the course of German cinema, melodrama had lent shape to the street film of the late silent era, the *Kammerspiel* films, 1950s spectacle films, the Heimat genre, even leftist cinema in the late Weimar Republic, like *Kuhle Wampe* (Dudow et al., 1932) and *Mutter Krausens fahrt ins Glück* / *Mother Krausen's Trip to Happiness* (Jutzi, 1929). But despite melodrama's considerable role in German film history at large, Reitz's bold decision to revisit the Heimat film during this new era of filmmaking was highly contested. *Germany, Pale Mother,* Sanders-Brahms's maternal melodrama, also met with controversy, with male German critics deriding its focus on female experience "on the homefront."[3] As late as 1994, Margarethe von Trotta's *Das Versprechen* / *The Promise,* an epoch melodramatic tale of two young lovers separated while attempting to leave East Germany for the West, remained a commercial and critical failure.

In spite of its homegrown tradition (or more likely because of it), and in spite of melodrama's European roots, in the 1970s, the New German Cinema and its critics were primarily responding to melodrama as an *American* product snuck in through the back door by the reviled television series and through the front by the Fassbinder-Sirk connection. The rise of melodramatic output was part of the movement's larger, but by no means uni-

form, nod towards American-influenced genres, as evidenced in Wenders's road movies and Fassbinder's early gangster movies. That change was in no small measure fueled by economic forces as the New German Cinema achieved greater international success. Historians are at pains to remind us of the considerable acclaim the movement received from abroad. Melodrama's "American" imprimatur served as a lightning rod to draw attacks on how history should be represented, and it also helped obscure the place of melodrama in Germany's own popular cinema culture, or its tainting of art movements *like* the New German Cinema. Awash in connotations of crass, imported commercialism and lowbrow populism, of heightened artifice and cheap sentiment, melodrama was, literally, bad form.

English and North American critics at the time read things very differently. Influenced by New German Cinema scholar Thomas Elsaesser's 1975 essay "Tales of Sound and Fury," academics were reinventing melodrama as a politically incisive, even progressive genre. "Readings against the grain" performed on melodramas—and other stylized genres like film noir, horror film, and musicals—were drawn to their enhanced referentiality, two-dimensional characters, banality, and especially their style. It was in these deviations from Hollywood's ostensibly invisible style that melodrama critics located critiques—challenges to the status quo that narrative or dialogue was unable to contain or express. That historically specific construction of melodrama also spilled over into the roughly contemporaneous reception (and construction) of the New German Cinema.

For a national film movement attempting to come to terms with recent history, melodrama makes a certain amount of sense, given its own preoccupation with past events, a point I will develop below. I should state at the outset, however, that that "past" is not as singular as the word might imply. Given that melodrama was construed as, among other things, both an American phenomenon and an emblem of repressed Nazi populism, it cannot excavate any pure, prelapsarian national identity or history. That is precisely the point. For melodrama ultimately dramatizes the irretrievability of the "stranded objects" of Germany's postwar psychic, social, and political landscapes—while simultaneously stressing their ongoing importance. The benefits of that dramatization, I contend, are not restricted to the initial audiences of the New German Cinema, despite the specificity of its stories, references, and the circumstances of its initial reception. Those reception conditions, kinds of audiences, and critical discourses, along with the passage of time, have showcased how history is continually renegotiated, with filmgoers taking up different relationships to it owing to a variety of forces and circumstances.

MUSIC AND THE EXCESSES OF THE NEW GERMAN CINEMA: THE EIGHTIES[4]

Melodrama and the New German Cinema both stressed the ongoing impact of the past upon the present, a thematic obsession that characterized melodramas by Fassbinder, Sanders-Brahms, von Trotta, and others. Lost lives, destroyed ideals, homes, national, psychic, racial, geographic, and political identities took residence in a variety of cinematic "material ghosts."[5] These were irrecoverable pasts, to be sure, but ones that could not be kept down. This partly explains the lure of hysteria as an exegetic tool, with its own emphasis on the "return of the repressed." Melodrama's various longings and elaborate (if not compulsive) restagings of past events recall Freud and Breuer's description of hysterics as people who "suffer from reminiscences."

The hermeneutic power of the hysterical model also derives from the idea that a trauma of the past—one subsequently buried beneath the realm of consciousness—cannot be directly articulated. The censored event seeks expression in displaced, nonlinguistic ways on the body of the patient—aphasic conditions, aches, twitches—through a process of somatic conversion. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith's "Minnelli and Excess" introduced the concept of hysterical somatic conversion into cinema analysis: films gave analyst/critics "bodies" to read symptomatically for signs of repressed meanings. In a sense, trauma renders its bodies unable to speak, forcing articulation out of nonlinguistic means (a point to which I return in Chapter Three). Peter Brooks acknowledged that speechlessness in his influential reference to melodrama as a "text of muteness"; David Grimsted called it an "echo of the historically voiceless."[6] It is no surprise that so many speechless characters populate classical Hollywood melodramas: Jane Wyman in *Johnny Belinda* (Negulesco, 1948), the mute servant in *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (Ophuls, 1948). Yet they frequently appear in the New German Cinema as well. Films like Wenders's *Falsche Bewegung* / *Wrong Move* and *Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter* / *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick* (1975 and 1971), *Even Dwarves Start Small* and Fassbinder's *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* and *Chinese Roulette* feature deaf, mute, and blind figures. Richard McCormick argues that their diminished perceptual abilities emerged from a more generalized alienation and distrust of language, perception, and experience that characterized German culture and politics after the disappointments of the 1960s.[7] These physical and communicative impairments, along with the disenfranchisement they intimate, were characteristic of the "inward turn" of the *Neue Subjektivität* / New Subjectivity in place by the mid-1970s. It

privileged local change and personal, subjective matters over objective, abstract theories of large-scale change, like the critique of capitalism that failed to deliver by the end of the 1960s.

The ability to speak is a powerful, recurring trope throughout the New German Cinema, and I will return to it in the work of Alexander Kluge. Questions of human speech cover a wide range. At the one end is Lene, the mother of the narrator in *Germany, Pale Mother*. Her diminished freedom after the war is somaticized through her facial paralysis and the extraction of her teeth that her husband authorized: toothless, she becomes speechless. At the other end of the spectrum is Oskar Matzerath, whose obstreperous screams pierce soundtrack (and eardrums) in *The Tin Drum*. These disparate depictions reveal not just the importance of the voice to representing the past, but a disinvestment or distrust in its naturalness. In other words, the films show the same suspicion of sound that theorists were elaborating vis-à-vis the cinematic image and its claims to truth, knowledge, naturalness, or objectivity. As a character in *Chinese Roulette* states, "We overhear the wrong truths," and *Maria Braun* displays wartime signs warning "Feind hört mit" (The enemy might be listening in). That same deauraticization informed production choices as well: Straub and Huillet would record live, continuous sound, only to subject it to extreme manipulation and fragmentation. Even the market-driven practice of filming in English (*Fitzcarraldo*; *Despair*) or of dubbing into German (*Fontane Effi Briest* [Fassbinder, 1974]) highlights the discrepancy between sound and source, putting in question the reliability and authenticity of the soundtrack.

If, as Brooks argued, the motor behind melodrama is its impulse to "express all," a certain shifting of registers is required in order that its expressive business of "pressing out" may be executed in a way unencumbered by conventional linguistic constraints. Thomas Elsaesser discusses strategies that "compensate for the expressiveness, range of inflection and tonality, rhythmic emphasis and tension normally present in the spoken word."[8] And this is where music steps in. It takes over where language, generically distrusted and lacking, leaves off, filling out what narrative and dialogue cannot accomplish. Working with other formal elements, music forms what Elsaesser calls a "system of punctuation, giving expressive colour and chromatic contrast to the story-line, by orchestrating the emotional ups and downs of the intrigue," indicating how melodrama amplifies music's conventional Hollywood function of providing passive, emotional support and background to visual drama.[9] For Nowell-Smith, melodrama's "undischarged emotion which cannot be accommodated within the action, subordinated as it is to the demands of family/lineage/inheritance, is tradi-

tionally expressed in the music and, in the case of film, in certain elements of the *mise-en-scène*. That is to say, music and *mise-en-scène* do not just heighten the emotionality of an element of the action: to some extent they substitute for it."[10] But where conventional melodramas are suspicious of language, the New German Cinema pushes further: for at the heart of *its* melodramatic imagination is a deep-seated distrust of representation itself.

Fassbinder worked collaboratively with Peer Raben for over fifteen years to produce the scores for his films; the director would suggest existing material to use, write lyrics to Raben's songs, and otherwise sustain a close, active involvement with the sound of his films.[11] It was Raben who first introduced Fassbinder to the work of Sirk, an encounter that yielded Fassbinder's well-known written accolade ("On the Films of Douglas Sirk"), meetings and collaborations with the retired director, and the beginning of his own melodrama cycle. Both men were fascinated with Sirk's Universal Studio melodramas and were thus keenly aware of how much their own soundtracks departed from Frank Skinner's heavily orchestrated scores. The brief musical snippets and undeveloped phrases Raben gives us (even in films closely modeled after Sirk's, like *Ali* or *The Merchant of Four Seasons*) repudiate music's typical over-the-top function in melodrama, just as they reject the unobtrusive, unifying function it had in many Hollywood studio scores more generally. Its conspicuously small role in these "art-melodramas" of the 1970s only increases our awareness of its detachment from the idea of authenticity of character emotion, background mood, composer's intention, or the purity of musical form or its cultural and historical connotations. This is not to say that music is absent from Fassbinder's early work. *Götter der Pest* / *Gods of the Plague* and *Warnung vor einer Heiligen Nutte* / *Beware of a Holy Whore* (both 1970), while containing stretches without musical accompaniment, have equally long periods of music as well.

SCORING THE *HOLY WHORE*

Fassbinder's *Beware of a Holy Whore* is a film about the making of a film. Completed in 1970, it was not released in German theatres until 1992, well after Fassbinder's death, due to the high costs of procuring music rights.[12] Like other films predating his melodrama phase (which began with *The Merchant of Four Seasons* in 1971), *Holy Whore* borrows melodramatic conventions rather than exemplifying the genre *tout court*. Its narrative is skeletal, and little happens in the way of dramatic twists and turns, as one would expect from melodrama. In fact, the genre's narrative function of unpredictability and

Lounging around in Fassbinder's *Beware of a Holy Whore.* Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art Film Stills Archive.

volatility is displaced onto diegetic figures. Characters loll around the lobby of a Spanish villa rented for a film shoot, waiting for the arrival of Jeff, the manipulative, abusive director, as paterfamilias of the film crew.

Even after he arrives, however, little happens. Throughout the course of the film, character movement is minimal; several unmotivated 360-degree pans dramatize the extent of their paralysis. Cast and crew drink and pair off indiscriminately for dancing and sex, smash drinking glasses—small, stylized revolts in otherwise eventless time and space. Yet for as visually and psychologically understated as it is, the soundtrack is clamorous and busy. Characters speak in German, Spanish, French, Italian, English, or combinations thereof, in various accents and dialects; often the speech of one character overlays and drowns out others. Dialogue coaches and interpreters are hired for Jeff's film, highlighting the disjointed paths of communication among speakers. The words spoken by characters are not their "own" in a number of ways. Swedish actor Lou Castel plays the Fassbinder character; Hannah Schygulla plays Hannah; Kurt Raab, Fassbinder's actor, ex-lover, and art director, portrays the film's set designer; Magdelena Montezuma hangs listlessly on the arm of the photographer Dieters, played by

Werner Schroeter, the director with whom the actress was intimately tied. She is named Irm after Fassbinder regular (and another ex-lover) Irm Hermann, whose voice is dubbed over Montezuma's, and whom Montezuma resembles, with her blond wig and tall, thin build. Hermann is also evoked through biographic details sent up in diegetic events. She pleads pitifully with Jeff, her former lover, who rebukes her, much as Fassbinder had done to her. Fassbinder himself appears as a veiled Peter Berling, his producer, who likewise appears in the film as someone else. The film, as German audiences were aware, was Fassbinder's acerbic response to the personal and financial difficulties he had had in shooting *Whity* earlier that year. One result of this complex intermeshing of profilmic and diegetic, of fact and depiction, is that characters become simultaneously flattened and overly layered. The interinhabitability of their roles shows how unstable their identities are, and it is impossible to accept the characters as psychologically credible individuals.

Mixed into this Tower of Babel is a steady stream of pop music from the 1960s (Ray Charles and Leonard Cohen), the presence of which is only partly explained by a jukebox in the room. The tunes are just background sound that seems as unmotivated as the characters that languish about: songs are played at a low to mid-range volume, and their lyrics don't provide any clear function or commentary. Nor is there much musically that connects the songs to the scene at hand—though the monotone vocals of Leonard Cohen do parallel the scene's visual stasis and melancholy. The foreign origins of most of the songs establish that music, like the speech just mentioned, is not of the characters' provenance. It is mass-produced, sung in the language of others, imported from the outside, German culture prefabricated in North America. (Interestingly, the characters sing a Protestant hymn at the bar at one point, a piece that appears just as foreign as the U.S. hits.)

Elsaesser has stressed how that sense of outsiderness inhabits the New German Cinema thematically, a trait that separates it from another nonnaturalistic movement, German Expressionism. Though rarely named as such, Expressionism has been crucial in the mechanics of the "melodramatic imagination." With its etymological roots in "pressing out," Expressionism, like "hysteria"—a term that entered psychoanalytic discourse at about the same historical moment as German Expressionism emerged—maintains that the stylistic excesses of a film reveals the internal mental states of a character that are "pressed out" in displaced, distorted fashion onto the text, as in the sets of *Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari* / *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Robert Weine, 1919), which articulate the instability of its narrator. As the prerecorded music in *Holy Whore* suggests, the sense of

outsiderness and importation that Elsaesser observes rallies against that kind of expressivity, of having come from "within." In other words, and unlike its standard melodramatic function, music does not give vent to something hidden within or behind the text.

What is probably the sole musical stinger of the film appears in a music fragment by Peer Raben. At the moment that the overdue director arrives, we hear an over-the-top, heavily attacked chord of an electronic piano made to emulate an organ, in the sappiest of early film melodrama tradition. This diminished fanfare simultaneously acknowledges and ridicules Jeff's narrative significance, his emotional import to diegetic figures, and his importance as a director. The brief, clichéd chord is subsequently joined by strings, soon generating a theme repeated with modest variations and developed somewhat more extensively as we move to the next scene, following Ricky's movement into a different room. The music here accompanies the character as an empty acoustic prop, providing hollow continuity between scenes.

Raben's repetitive music fragments in *Holy Whore* and in his other work have prompted critics to denounce his scoring style as monotonous or unsophisticated. But as David Raksin's monothematic *Laura* (Preminger, 1944) proved decades earlier, even history's most acclaimed scores trade in repetition. Moreover, as Russell O. Potter and James Snead have argued, much of the attack on repetitive music is motivated by racist and elitist biases. Detractors often align it with mindlessness or uncritical reception (think of Adorno in this regard), linking it to non-European, African, and African-American cultures in particular. Potter and Snead, by contrast, focus on the differences contained within repetition, and the challenge it poses to linear, developmental, and more goal-oriented forms of musical expression.[13] If the endlessly repeated theme song in *Laura* may seem to bathe its auditors in the fetishistic aura of its lost woman, Raben's work provides us with something quite different: its sparsely inserted "pieces of pieces" refuse to unify or emotionalize its repetitive fragments.

Given the sheer number of "anti-melodramas" he scored for Fassbinder, and given that he was the most active composer of the New German Cinema, it is easy to discern patterns in Raben's work. He frequently features oboe and piano, he will use children's instruments, and certain progressions and patterns of development recur from film to film. Of particular relevance to the melodramas is the fact that his original music—taking form once again in brief themes, or variations thereof—usually accompanies travel scenes. In *Holy Whore* it accompanied Jeff as he moved from one room to another, but it usually covers broader spatial and even temporal passages, following the movement of a car and/or movements into the

past. We hear this in Jeanine Meerapfel's *Malou* (1981) as Hannah (Grischa Huber) drives to Alsace to explore the past of her late mother, a Gentile who had left the country with her German Jewish husband during the war. Daniel Schmid's nostalgic *Hors Saison* / *Off Season* (1993) tells the story of a man who revisits the deserted small hotel where he had lived as a child. Raben's music travels with him into a place that unleashes a flood of memories. And if that function seems to adhere to the principles of standard film musical cuing (where music provides continuity during geographical or temporal dislocations), we have seen how contrived that continuity can be, as Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in *Maria Braun* made clear.

Elsaesser has made much of the layered, nonlinear temporality in Fassbinder's work. This, I believe, is also evident in Raben's music. Though a bogus indicator of linear space and time, it makes the more important point that history is necessarily intertwined with the present. *Malou*, for example, weaves from country to country, from one woman's past to another's present. Watching, one cannot delineate where Hannah's search for her mother's past ends and her own begins. The fragmented nature of Raben's themes abets that quasi-permeability between past and present, and the inability to separate fully one era or location from another.[14] Their repetitive nature helps underscore the unsatisfiable, yet insistent, desire of contemporary figures to establish pieces of identity through their pasts in order to change things—or at least understand them.

"THE FOUR SEASONS"

Given this yearning for different pasts (and for other ways in which the present may have worked), it would be incorrect to say that Raben's melodramatic scores are without emotion or affect, however withholding they may seem. Consider Fassbinder's *Merchant of Four Seasons*, which follows the story of Hans Epp (Hans Hirschmüller), a produce vendor taunted by his mother, his memories, and his current imperfect, inescapable station in life. His marriage has little passion, and after he suffers a heart attack, Epp's new business help becomes his wife's lover. Defying his physician's warning that more alcohol will kill him, Epp goes on a binge and holds court at a table of drinking mates who watch him as he effectively drinks himself to death. *Four Seasons* was Fassbinder's first Sirk-influenced melodrama, although the story was reportedly inspired by the story of his own uncle and by Fontane's *Effi Briest*.[15] Raben's score for the film is sparse, containing less than five minutes of original music. When the main theme finally does appear nearly an hour into the film, it is only in pieces, a melody fragment

Hans Epp drinks himself to death in Fassbinder's *Merchant of Four Seasons*. Courtesy of the Kobal Collection.

never allowed resolution. Norbert Jürgen Schneider notes, "Clearly a film lacking music, this corresponds to Hans Epp's emotionally barren world."[16] Yet that absence does not *undermine* the conventional associations of film music with emotional expressivity so much as underscore it. Because Epp, like the equally listless, self-destructive characters of *Holy Whore*, is not emotionless. For all his paralysis, Epp's is a life of *too many* emotions, a history too overcome with grief, a self-disappointment reinforced by characters past and present. Withholding music under these circumstances, I believe, is proof that emotions are not easily rendered musically. It also demonstrates that some of the emotional force of music resides precisely in its *inability* to deliver, much as Fassbinder maintained that by withholding happy endings, he made them more possible.

The pivotal music in *Four Seasons* is Rocco Granata's "Buona Notta Bambino." (Raben told me that had he used more of his own music, it would have detracted from this work.) Epp plays his treasured recording several times over the course of the film, but finally smashes the record. When he does, we know he is giving up on its phantasmatic promises and hopes (of his mother's affections, or those of his "one lost love") as well as the fragile subjectivity it glued together. Yet internal motives or psychological character traits do not altogether explain the violence of the act. The

tantrum's declarative component is key: Epp's acting out transforms the already stagy aspects of the melodrama into an even more externalized performance. Thus, in addition to establishing the fact that Epp has given up on his "emotionally barren" world—a reading consolidated by his ensuing suicide—we are also shown the *necessity of the act itself,* not unlike melodrama's desideratum of a moment of recognition, whether it be heeded or not. Framed this way, music is tied to need rather than its fulfillment. Although that fulfillment is denied at every corner, this does nothing to diminish the importance of the desire *for* it. For with Fassbinder, no music is up to that impossibly redemptive task, be it original scoring like Raben's, popular songs (U.S. and German *Schlager*), high art forms (Donizetti, camped up in *Martha* [1973] and *Whore*), or combinations of all three (*Lili Marleen).*[17]

REFUSING REDEMPTION: *HERR R*

Strictly speaking, *Warum läuft Herr R Amok? / Why Does Herr R Run Amok?* (1970) is not a melodrama, nor even a genre film, although it borrows heavily from melodramatic traditions. It tells the story of a lower-middle-class man, Herr R, numbed from all sides: boss, coworkers, mother-in-law, neighbors, even, apparently, his wife. Without explicit motivation, he suddenly kills her as she is talking with a neighbor, whom Herr R also murders before his own suicide. This tale of a beleaguered bourgeois calls to mind the American melodrama *Bigger than Life* (Ray, 1956), although there James Mason's final murderous rampage against his family not only is kept in check by buddy Walter Matthau, but is explained by his cortisone treatments. Fassbinder's film, by contrast, withholds answers for R's actions, toying with our expectations by having that basic question appear as its very title. It is arguably a purer melodrama for having its actions occur as abruptly and as irrationally as they do (this occurs in Fassbinder's other melodramas, notably *Mother Kusters,* which opens on the unexplained murder/suicide of Herr Krausen). *Herr R* vaguely presents the stifling situation of R's workaday existence by stressing his silence among incessantly chatty people, all of whom operate more or less as position-holders in familial, social, and class structures. The alphabetic rendering of the character's name in the title (Herr R also designates Kurt Raab, the actor portraying him) establishes the commonness of the situation and the ease into which other "names" may be inserted into its deadly genericness.

As is common with Fassbinder's early output, *Herr R* has no nondiegetic music—a consequence of budgetary limitations, among other things. But

like the question of why the character "runs amok," the film plays with the expectation that music *should* be present. A fairly drawn-out scene in a record store dramatizes that "should-be presence." Clearly out of touch with the trends of popular music, R is amusing to two young saleswomen trying to remember a hit "about love" that he wants to purchase for his wife. Recalling only the most banal lyric-fragments, he tunelessly hums its melody, to no avail. Another source of music's inadequate presence is the television/radio console at his home; it plays terribly recorded English- and German-language pop songs (and offers another nod to the U.S. melodrama *Bigger than Life* since, as Mason and Matthau brawl, the television set pumps out bizarre carnival music). The most conspicuous reference to music's should-be presence, however, occurs in a brief scene in which Peer Raben cameos as R's old school friend. Raben plays the harmonica as R sings an old hymn (the one sung in *Holy Whore*). R's pleasure from this musical memory is one of his few moments of clear joy. It seems a wish for what Paul Coates identifies in melodrama more generally, that "things could always have been different."[18]

Peer Raben articulates something between the melodramatic and the utopian when he writes that music "supports something that isn't yet in the image, nor in the mind either . . . a truth we discover in another sense to come." Discussing a melody he composed for Fassbinder's *Liebe ist Kälter als der Tod* / *Love Is Colder than Death* (1969) that he had borrowed from a Spanish madrigal, he says, "Melody seemed entirely appropriate to break up Fassbinder's laconic characters and, consequently, made them speak in a different way: At the time I really wasn't aware that they were expressing themselves in Spanish through my music."[19] The remark is in one sense in perfect keeping with conventional melodrama. But by refusing to make a one-to-one match between music and diegesis (historically, culturally, thematically), Raben highlights the alternate scenarios to which it gestures.

HINTS OF ALTERITY

Raben's unwillingness to interiorize musical signs, or for that matter to associate them with any direct utopianism, is evident in his score of Fassbinder's *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul,* in which Emmi (Brigitte Mira), a middle-aged widow, becomes involved with Ali (El Hedi ben Salem), a Moroccan worker much younger than she. The North African music that appears intermittently in its spartan score reasserts the rigid racial divides of the film's diegesis. The music offers no escape to Ali and his friends, who are

Fragile utopias: Emmi and Ali in Fassbinder's *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*

never depicted without it. For them it is an auditory reminder of Germany's unwillingness to accept anything about them except their status as *Gastarbeiter*. In other words, it proffers Ali acoustic signs of his purported ethnic and cultural identity while simultaneously reminding him of that identity's distance from him. The racist pub owner tells Emmi that there's German music on the jukebox, but "they prefer their own."

Yet for Emmi the music extends the possibility of a refuge. Fassbinder has long been noted for his interest in disenfranchised people. For a cleaning woman whose labor is ill-paid, and for whom, as a middle-aged woman, her sexual worth plummets, the North African music might offer a momentary escape from western norms and pressures. This is not to say that the music functions as pure metonym for Ali's Arab culture or that Emmi's is a simple, open celebration of it. Far from it. Their initial meeting, for instance, is at the grimly named Asphalt Pub, where they dance to one of the jukebox tunes. The song is not Arab but an old, scratchy popular German tune (later referred to as "that gypsy record"), significantly the only non-Arab music heard in the bar—or most of the film, for that matter. In typical melodramatic fashion, the scene will be restaged at the end of the film as Emmi and Ali try to regain the intimacy and trust of the earlier days.

During their dance Ali comments, "German master, Arab dog." Emmi displays no such mastery and dramatizes the fiction of that kind of identi-

factory privilege. First is her age: "I know I'm old, and I can't stop you from doing what you want"; and then her name, Kurowski, which, as her neighbors say, "is no name for a German." While dancing, the two characters use just enough words to get to know one another. As Judith Mayne has observed, language is limited for both characters: there is Ali's fractured German and Emmi's reliance on popular clichés and platitudes.[20] True to melodramatic form, language offers little, draping figures with the telltale marks of national difference and class. Unfamiliar with the vocabulary of an upper-class restaurant she visits with Ali, Emmi is unable to negotiate the waiter's queries for an aperitif or the degree of doneness for their steaks. Upholding melodramatic tradition, words do little except to construct the barest, most superficial aspects of their identities.

Nor does music come rushing in to redress such deficiencies, as it would in a more conventional melodrama. The score offers little extravagance or even sustenance to its characters. Take, for instance, the nondiegetic music that appears briefly on three occasions. Initially we hear a brief, aimless melody when Ali and Emmi talk in bed the night they meet, then as Ali goes toward the bar after he's walked out on her, and later at the end of the film as the image fades to black. Thoroughly conventional in style, the short, unmotivated phrase appears to be Fassbinder/Raben's wink at music's typical emotional function in melodrama. Similarly, when Emmi announces, "Now I'll play our record," when putting "the gypsy music" on the jukebox at their engagement celebration, it is difficult to hear anything but hollow promises and doomed identification (by this point, the song's initial promise has been perforated like the ulcers that plague Ali).

MELODRAMA AND WOMEN'S MODALITIES

In the 1980s, scholars considered melodrama a women's genre, due to its historical popularity with female audiences and the spectatorial engagement it was believed to offer. Although these assumptions have been nuanced or overtly challenged since then, it is important to stress their importance in European film culture at the time. Directors like Margarethe von Trotta, Jeanine Meerapfel, and Helma Sanders-Brahms were closely aligned with the genre—as were male counterparts like Reitz who were more centrally positioned in the New German Cinema. Despite this collective interest in exploring the past, however, the women directors' motivations for using melodrama were different, partly due to the genre's historical "feminization." To be sure, some of these directors—von Trotta most vocally—militated against that very feminization: "What does it mean? Every Hollywood film in which

women are playing the lead calls itself a 'woman's film.' I would like to eliminate this genre description from the face of the earth."[21]

But in light of the various links (historical, scholarly, popular) among women, femininity, and the domestic sphere at the time, melodrama seemed an appropriate form with which to explore historical issues from female-centered perspectives and memory. Critics maintain it provided a way for women's voices and experience to speak; it could also be tied to an autobiographical impulse that their male counterparts left largely unexplored. As Barbara Kosta notes, autobiographical modes gave women directors a way to mediate between the subjective experience of women and women's public construction and positioning in "history."[22] These German melodramas, as Renate Möhrmann, Julia Knight, Susan Linville, and other feminist scholars have stressed, presented history intertwined with subjective and intersubjective connections. Moreover, they argue, the women's melodramas eschewed masculinist norms, assumptions, and perspectives. (As Linville notes, even the Mitscherlichs' theory of a national "inability to mourn" assumed a male German subject with small room for women, gays and lesbians, and people of color, a point to which I will return.) For Möhrmann, women's melodrama achieved something even more radical. Sanders-Brahms's *Germany, Pale Mother,* she writes, exposed the "deficiency" of the male system through its critical depiction of the return after the war of the "patriarchal project."[23] In contrast to U. S. melodramas, with their abundant clichés of fallen women, or desexualized virgins and mothers, feminist German melodrama of the time "stages the swan song of patriarchal discourse and the entry of mothers into film history. The absence of fathers, their departure for the Second World War, frees the mothers—as these films show us—from the limitations of their gender roles . . . for everyone to see."[24]

What Möhrmann observes at textual levels also applies to the economic contexts of the films, since financial, political, and social aspects of production, distribution, exhibition, and reception were different for West German female filmmakers. Directors like Ulrike Ottinger, Jutta Brückner, Helke Sander, and Ula Stöckl (in addition to Meerapfel, Sanders-Brahms, and von Trotta) emerged from progressive, leftist contexts that had been largely impervious to women's issues. They were also responding to a newly established cinematic institution—the New German Cinema, populated by celebrated male *Autoren* who were having a much easier time getting their films made and distributed than the women were. Another context for their work was the contemporary feminist debates over cinema's relationship to social issues, questions about cinematic realism, and the possibility of a female or feminist aesthetics. How, for instance, to repre-

sent women's bodies, stories, and concerns that had been historically cast to the sidelines?[25]

Part of that immediate historical context was established by *frauen und film,* the journal Helke Sander started in 1974. By the early 1980s, the journal had shifted toward theoretical questions of representation,[26] but in the early years it featured essays on directors like Maya Deren, Leni Riefenstahl, and Yvonne Rainer. The journal's position favored documentary and realism for contemporary female directors. Now given documentary's long-standing association with education and social issues, the preference was justified: pressing women's concerns were at hand, such as Paragraph 218 and the threat to criminalize abortion. Yet, as we shall see in Chapter Five, for directors working in more stylized or fictional venues—like Sander, Mikesch, and Ottinger—controversy, disdain, or neglect often awaited the release of their films in the women's community.

Among the films that used melodramatic form to explore the intersection of the past with the present were von Trotta's *Schwestern, oder die Balance des Glücks* / *Sisters, or the Balance of Happiness* (1979) which, as the name implies, was told from a sister's perspective, as was *Marianne and Juliane.* Adult *daughters* tell the family dramas of Sanders-Brahms's *Germany, Pale Mother* and Meerapfel's *Malou,* and their quests for personal and historical identities are centered around their mothers. Although these directors did not express interest in American melodrama—compare von Trotta's remarks with Fassbinder's boisterous homage to Sirk—their films nonetheless share the "nonstyle or zero-degree style" of American women's films of the 1930s and 1940s.[27] The formal excesses that characterized the work of Sirk, Minnelli, Ray, and others were simply not there in these German women's melodramas. We can see how they thus operated on the periphery of both typical melodramatic form *and* the documentary modes of women's filmmaking prevalent in Germany at the time. Some of these films focussed their critique on Germany of the 1950s, not a time of "miracles" for them, but, as the original title of *Marianne and Juliane* makes clear, a "leaden time," when West Germany was returning to conventional gendered and sexed roles and the (re)formation of the German family and state.

Finding a voice was important for these female directors, and its thematic and formal prominence in their films is not incidental. For all its suspicions of language, melodrama seemed able to provide a voice for these women, even if, as Susan Linville has argued, their films usually suggested a differently gendered relationship to stories, their telling, and the ways of "coming to terms" that could be articulated through the genre. Finding a voice often involved telling histories that had been given little public voice before,

even within theoretical paradigms such as the Mitscherlichs' masculinist conception of mourning work, as Linville argues. Their films focussed on women's coming-of-age stories and the experiences of mothers and daughters at the "home front," enduring the war and its aftermath, as in *Malou* or *Germany, Pale Mother.* Von Trotta's *Marianne and Juliane* was a little different. Loosely based on the story of Gudrun Ensslin (here, Juliane), one of the three members of the Baader-Meinhof terrorist group who "suicided" under suspicious circumstances in the high-security Stammheim prison, it follows Marianne, her sister, who preserves what would have been Juliane's submerged history. Marianne passes the political, personal story along to her sister's young son, Jan, who, after much ambivalence, finally asks her about his dead mother at the end of the film. However clichéd an avatar of the future he may be, he represents an openness to the consumption of new histories: "Begin, begin!" he says. Nondiegetically, Juliane's sure-to-have-been-censored history is passed on to audiences as well, giving a personal perspective to the terrorist events that, at the time of the film's release, were rocking Germany (the U.S. reception of the film concentrated principally on its female-female relationship).

By selecting a personal, melodramatic format to approach a recent and volatile political event, von Trotta conveys the extent to which affect and history are linked. She also conveys that repression is at once a political and psychological phenomenon. The latter is established through the use of film form. If vertical excavation is a central trope for the attempts to dig out new histories in Kluge's *The Patriot,* here the layers of repression are laterally sculpted into the mise-en-scène. The building in which Juliane is jailed reveals the material, institutional dimensions of the process. When Marianne visits, she enters through an initial series of doors, is then escorted by a guard into a room where she is strip-searched, brought out a door through a courtyard into a new building to a waiting room, and finally sees Juliane in the room next to that. At another point a pane of glass separates them when they "meet." Juliane's story could not be more locked away and separated. Marianne—who is strongly ambivalent about her sister, resenting her "abandonment" of her husband and son for life as a political fugitive—becomes obsessed with learning more. She has to rely on material fragments and affective evidence alone to vindicate her sister, just as *Malous*'s Hannah would comb through photographs and memento to try to tell her mother's story.

Marianne takes measurements and then restages her sister's hanging, basically re-presenting it—much like the work that the film itself does. The film also mimics Marianne's efforts to produce history infused with affect and personal subjectivity. *Marianne and Juliane* is punctuated by flash-

backs to the two sisters' childhood, another realm mediated by politicized events, particularly when Marianne recalls their horrified response to watching Resnais's 1955 *Night and Fog*. Affect and politics are inseparable here; in his insightful response to the film, Barton Byg notes, "Rather than criticize hysterical responses to terrorism, the film employs its emotive power."[28] Mark Silberman comments on the subjective nature of its "narrative logic," noting that the film's realism is a "mimesis of the psyche rather than a model of verisimilitude."[29] But for all of these defenses of the film's strategies, there were attacks. Was it "hiding" something? In a particularly scathing review, Charlotte Delorme wrote, "[I]f *Marianne and Juliane* were really what it claims to be, it would not have gotten any support, distribution, and exhibition."[30]

Aware of the pressing psychic, sociopolitical need to find meaningful personal histories, these melodramas, even nostalgic efforts like *Malou*, seem aware of the fantastic, elusive nature of their project. Access to memories, mastering or even uncovering a clarifying, edifying past was always a messy, mediated affair, almost impossibly so. These films suggested that contemporary identity had multiple relationships to events, facts, or figures of the past, and that one might disidentify as much as identify with them. Like many postwar children, Malou's daughter searches for a past she herself never experienced. Even her mother's story is piecemeal and unsettled, associated with so many different national, religious, and linguistic "homes" as to preclude a singular story or identity in the first place. The film's style dramatizes the difficult access to memory and the past; characters constantly play and work around material scraps and quirky shrines. Martin, Hannah's husband, is commissioned to design a cultural center and is told by officials, "You won't solve anything with that 'old stuff.'" Angry, he turns on Hannah, chiding her for her "useless" obsession with the photographs of her mother (von Trotta's Marianne is similarly criticized by her male partner, a pattern Susan Linville notes in examining the gendered patterns of remembrance in the two films). After her many journeys back, Hannah is nowhere closer to peace, a sense of identity, or an improved relationship with Martin. The film closes with a dramatic aerial shot of her and Martin literally going around in circles, trying to find each other on the roof of a skyscraper.

Malou places great weight on the material scraps of cinema itself (photographed images, music) as the means by which the past can be approached. That Malou (Ingrid Caven) is a singer—and often performs in the style of Marlene Dietrich, or at least this seems to be the historical recollection she encourages—further foregrounds the staged nature of her daughter's recovery. And even if our attention is drawn to the dramatic

component of her songs, the overall acoustic strategies of *Malou* and these other women's melodramas reveal less displacement—less potential "hysteria," if you will—than those of films like *Herr R*, as I noted in relation to their style in general. To be sure, their scores are not so different from Fassbinder's melodramas (that Raben worked on a number of these should not be discounted). Music is conspicuously low key—and brief. For *Germany, Pale Mother,* Norbert Jürgen Schneider counts an average of 77 seconds of music in 21 cues (in total, 22% of the film's length); only 17% of von Trotta's *Sisters* and 8% of Fassbinder's *Merchant* are scored.[31]

In that regard, the scores of the women's German melodramas function like those of Fassbinder. Music retreats rather than reassures, appearing in fragments without resolution, much as the historiographic assumptions of the films operate. The inability to attain closure vis-à-vis the past is formally suggested by Raben's score for *Malou*, which reproduces the circularity of the plot. It presents a myriad of variations of "Ein kleines Franzeschen."[32] The song's association with Malou is evident before the story even begins, when we see her performing it over the opening credits. Throughout the film, it moves seamlessly from diegetic to nondiegetic situations, whether sung by Malou/Caven, or nondiegetically accompanying Hannah or Malou as each picks through the photographs of her past, or with Hannah as she seems to travel to that temporal past by driving to Malou's home in Alsace. But the circularity doesn't dramatize a lack of direction, just the fictive nature of resolution.

Jürgen Knieper's soundtrack to Sanders-Brahms's *Germany, Pale Mother* is similarly sparse and compelling. Nonmusical sounds such as air raids and radio transmissions of political events intrude into key personal moments, such as Lene's birthday party early in the film or, as I have already mentioned, the birth of her child. Some of the sound sources are diegetic, like the radio at Lene's birthday gathering; others are not. Most blur diegetic borders altogether. The intercutting of clearly documentary air raid sirens and footage with the birth scene appears to be nondiegetic, or at least nonsynchronous, but later Lene mentions having given birth during an air raid. Sounds here offer literal examples of public culture, policy, and governance penetrating what would seem to be extremely private, domestic spaces—just as Fassbinder did to ironic effect in the opening of *Maria Braun.* It is against that invasive backdrop that Knieper's music struggles, as Schneider has observed.

Schneider focuses on the plaintive piano music fragments that recur throughout the film, describing it as a "solo instrument placed on the same level as the commenting voice of the [narrating] author,"[33] a point driven home as the theme fuses with the rhythms of Lene's breath at one point.

In a film concerned with the acquisition and consequent undoing of a maternal voice, the choice of instrumentation is interesting. For even though the matching of a solo instrument such as the piano performs the rather unexceptional function of individualization, the near-complete absence of any other music makes it difficult to read it as expressive in the typical sense of the term—much as this use of music flies in the face of an excessive, melodramatic style.

As his career developed and budgets grew, Fassbinder's melodramas became more lavishly stylized than his earlier work. They would also concentrate on the experiences of female rather than male characters—Veronika Voss replaced Hans Epp; Lili Marleen, Herr R—and the director would tell interviewers he found women more interesting to work with. But unlike Anna or Hannah, who go in search of history from within the constellation of the family, few domestic frameworks encumber (or abet) the protagonists of Fassbinder films like *Die Sehnsucht der Veronika Voss* / *Veronika Voss* (1982) or *Lili Marleen*. Their identities, drives, and desires are bound up in other social, economic, and cultural institutions of what Elsaesser calls the enticing machinery of "image-making." Fassbinder's bypassing of the family is significant, even if German cinema had never shared the American tradition of presenting family as a utopian haven: "Both visually and in his narratives, Fassbinder in effect distances himself from the Oedipal time of the family romance and the primal scene of 'the marriages of our parents,' giving the spectator no illusion of depth, of entering or penetrating the recesses of the fiction: his flat, evenly or underlit images invite no 'inwardness,' but merely complicate infinitely a visual surface, put 'en abyme' by the multiple frames and overlaid action spaces of sound and image."[34]

In exchanging an ostensibly private domain for a public, exhibitionist one in these later melodramas, Fassbinder directs our attention to the politics of *re*presentation. "What emerges," says Elsaesser in a remark more applicable to film sound than it admits, "is the notion that cinema has a claim on history, where this history is spectacle and make-believe, deception and self-deception."[35] For Raben's scores for the "New German Melodramas" *bank* on that very deception and inauthenticity, even as they establish an "authentic" historical period and a historicized locus of desire. For example, he describes the song "Capri Fishermen" (Winkler/Siegel), which turns up in films like *Lili Marleen*, *Lola* (1981), *Maria Braun*, and Schmid's *Hors Saison*, as "epitomizing [German] longing of the 1950s."[36] Such scores seem to recognize the generic obligation to provide *some* form of emotionalism, which they do, but not without self-consciously tweaking the material, historical, and ideological hardware behind that same func-

tion, whether by ironizing the music, making it "too simple," "too brief," or, in the case of *Lili Marleen*, "too much"—a point that recalls not only hysterical and melodramatic modes of signification but melancholic ones as well.

THE CAMP ENCOUNTER

It should probably come as no surprise that the Fassbinder film that gets the most opprobrium is *Lili Marleen*, whose focus on "things, not people," is announced by its subtitle, "the story of a song." Loosely based on the memoirs of Lale Anderson, whom Fassbinder's friend and critic Christian Braad Thomsen calls simply a "cheap variety singer,"[37] it concentrates on the singer's wartime affair with Rolf Liebermann, the Jewish administrator, conductor, and occasional composer who would eventually direct the Paris Opera. With *Lili Marleen*'s record-breaking budget, German critics were complaining that Fassbinder had sold out before the film was even released. Thomsen, for his part, opines that the film is recklessly paced and performed and is inattentive to detail, even geographical locale, flaws that he attributes to Fassbinder's purported disinterest in the project.[38] That same spatial and temporal indeterminacy leads Saul Friedlander to compare the film to Nazism's own poisonous mix of transcendence, myth, and death in his study on kitsch and fascism.[39] Along the same lines, Paul Coates argues that *Lili Marleen* turns German history into "candy floss," a bloated, overproduced spectacle that encourages passive fascination. Like Friedlander, he maintains that it deploys fascism's shimmering tropes of mass spectacle only to repeat them uncritically. To be sure, not all critics find the film offensive or thoughtless—although most of its enthusiastic reception came from abroad and was after its initial release. For Elsaesser, *Lili Marleen* exposes global capitalism's "commodifying but also charging with desire the material and immaterial fetish objects of the past," thereby making it impossible to whisk Nazism away into a hermetically sealed twelve-year period.[40] In an analysis that is especially sensitive to the soundtrack, David Bathrick argues that Fassbinder's film indicts Nazism's own mass entertainment machinery.[41]

Like most pop tunes, "Lili Marleen" is musically uncomplicated. Originally written as "Der Wachposten," its sentimental lyrics tell of a soldier's longing for women left behind. A popular tune, it was nonetheless pivotal to the largely unsympathetic reception of the Fassbinder film. It simply had too many associations. Anderson had sung it to Wehrmacht troops, Dietrich to Allied ones. Goebbels despised it ("crap with the stench of death,"

as the film relays it),[42] but it pleased Hitler, and its transmission on German radio became a popular daily ritual. Combining nostalgia with nationalism, populism, and propaganda, "Lili Marleen" was as *Volkisch* and kitschy as it was carefully groomed by Nazism's sophisticated, cynical mass media. In a sense, it was so full of meanings that it became virtually meaningless. Raben and Fassbinder capitalized on that by relentlessly repeating the piece in what is nearly a monothematic score. To critics, Fassbinder and Raben fetishized the song; I would argue instead that they were exaggerating its fetishistic function to the point of exhaustion, consigning it to empty, vicious repetition. To further taint it, Raben orchestrated the piece in the style of composers in favor with the Reich, like Wagner and Bruckner, grafting an unsettling complicity onto any nostalgic pleasures older audiences might have had in listening to it. (Its composer, Norbert Schultze, would complain to Raben that he had turned his song "into a helmet," to which Raben replied, "Precisely.")[43]

For many, however, the glitzy "story about a song" merely traded in degraded registers of camp and kitsch. In what seems a transferal of his own possible contempt for camp onto the film's director, Paul Coates writes:

> For all its apparent delectation of Nazism as camp spectacle, Fassbinder is disdainful of camp's empty-headedness. Sadistically cramming an excess of candy-floss into a digestive system addicted to junk food, he is kind to be cruel. His contempt for camp, however, is not dictated by his occupation of the higher ground of analysis. . . . By trading in melodramatic clichés, the later films flatter the audience into the delusion that [noticing generic conventions engenders insight into historical contexts]. Peer Raben's music—melted-down Weill—performs a similar function, which is less one of camp than of kitsch: As Eco puts it, a quotation unable to generate a new context. . . . [We conceptualize] kitsch as the product of a desire to work "beautifully" rather than well.[44]

Coates makes a convincing point that Fassbinder's earlier, pared-down melodramas, like *Merchant* and *Fear,* provide more sophisticated analyses of fascism's psychological, social, and economic mechanisms than the later films, even though the latter situated their stories in Nazi and post-Nazi eras. He argues that the early films tackle the ostensibly apolitical psychic and social mechanisms that enabled fascist structuration to endure decades after the end of the war. By using contemporary, peacetime diegetic settings, that critique was made all the more trenchant. It is nonetheless strange that given Coates's preference for Fassbinder's early, male-centered melodramas, he selects the term "melodramatic clichés" to attack *Lili Marleen.* It would seem that, in the final analysis, style is the culprit: "The later films, however, are fatally compromised by pretension: Their empty,

mannered virtuosity glazes the low-ceilinged power games of the early films with a distancing sheen of allegory [that ultimately] bespeaks no Brechtian peasant wisdom, only unquenchable triviality. . . . Intended as essays on German history, the later films do not probe the past, however, but surround it with decorative ricochets of reflections."[45]

Elsaesser's work contains some of the same kinds of contradictions. While his sensitivity to melodrama and camp influences on the New German Cinema and on Fassbinder in particular is beyond doubt, he has a disturbing take on Fassbinder's 1973 television film, *Martha*. Based on Cornel Woolrich's "For the Rest of their Lives," *Martha* tells the tale of an emotionally and sexually underdeveloped woman (Margit Carenson) living at home with overbearing parents. Helmut (Karlheinz Böhm, of Powell's 1960 *Peeping Tom* fame) first espies Martha on vacation as her father suffers a sudden, fatal heart attack. Aroused, Helmut courts her, and the two soon marry. What follows is gothic overload. Refusing to move into her family home, Helmut forces Martha to live in a dark, overbearing house. He increasingly restricts her movement, removing her from her job, forcing her to stay home, even cutting off telephone service. Their sexual life is a series of painful encounters, most gruesomely dramatized when he lets her fall asleep in the sun and afterwards forces himself on her scorched body. Martha grows aware of the anomalous nature of her relationship (a slow recognition since, in classical Fassbinder style, a female friend advises that "a little roughness is a sign of passion") and tries to escape with a male friend, her only outside connection. Their suspicious car accident kills her companion and leaves Martha permanently confined to a wheelchair. Despite her terrorized protests, hospital officials release her into the care of her husband, and the film concludes showing Helmut wheeling her ominously out of the corridor. Elsaesser describes *Martha* as one of "Fassbinder's most accomplished comedies."[46]

He is probably not alone in this view. When I show the film to students, their responses are mixed, as they are to most melodramas. Some respond to its pathos; others to its possible social critique; some find it hopelessly misogynistic; for others, it is nothing but ludicrous camp. Given the extent to which *Martha* hyperbolizes male sadism and female masochism and stages them within a hyperconventional bourgeois marriage, it would be ludicrous to deny its potential camp effects. Yet camp is *not* coterminous with comedy, and Elsaesser's terminological slippage fits with disquieting ease into Leo Bersani's troubling assertion that gay male camp "lovingly assassinates [a certain type of femininity],"[47] a point I discuss in Chapters Five and Six.

Christian Thomsen, the critic who wants nothing to do with anything remotely camp or kitsch, takes on Fassbinder's *Satansbraten* / *Satan's*

Brew. This 1976 film follows Walter Kranz (Kurt Raab), a frustrated writer who slowly descends into madness while assuming the identity of the rather more successful and sexually desirable writer Stefan George. It is one of Fassbinder's campiest works. Thomsen writes: "*Satan's Brew* is a film that belongs on the garbage dump of our civilization, in which the most revelatory things about our society can be found. That is why it is worth showing it in a cinema, for theatres are gradually becoming garbage dumps to which one has to pay admission. There is nothing edifying about *Satan's Brew*. The film is repellent and unpleasant in every respect, without a single conciliatory scene."[48]

Thomsen's fierce objections to the film's camp aesthetic demonstrate that more is at stake than meets the eye. These intimations are fleshed out later in an astonishing claim about *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980): "There are no sexual undertones," writes Thomsen, "to the relationship [between Franz and Reinhold]."[49] What is it that motivates this kind of denial? While arguing on the one hand that *Lili Marleen* bore the signs of Fassbinder's indifference, Thomsen also maintains that the director sadomasochistically identified with *Satan's Brew* while knowing it was aesthetically, maybe morally, "repellent" to do so. But does this explain Thomsen's desire to toss Fassbinder's attachment on the garbage heap along with the film? Might not identifying with "repellent" aspects of figures, texts, and stories open one up to difference? It is, after all, a form of listening to perceived unpleasantness, to alterity, and a potential way of avoiding projecting abjection onto images that do not reflect back to us idealized, recognizable selves. Camp is often construed this way.

Kurt Raab's over-the-top performance as Walter Kranz is in keeping with the film's interest in role-playing and socio-sexual place-holding. Dressing up as Stefan George, Kranz "loses" his own identity as he accumulates more signs of the writer's, conspicuously revealed through increased make-up, garb, and accessories. Kranz even hires a group of young men to listen to his readings and adulate him, as if paying performance rights will purchase the sexual cachet and cult value of Stefan George. Characters are mere participants in a fantasy that theatrically attempts to remake a life in the present out of an idealized one from the past. As Fassbinder remarked, "The way I thought of it, Kranz was the central figure, and everyone around him is kind of invented. He treats the people around him as if they were characters in stories he is just telling. Because he lives this life as an artist, all situations are for him moments of play. Even the death of his wife is such a moment of play—for him, this is a character he's dropped, because it's a character he had invented."[50]

Although I return to the degraded status of camp and kitsch in Chapters Five and Six, it is worth noting here that critics often use the terms pejora-

Invented characters: Kurt Raab as Walter Kranz as Stefan George in Fassbinder's *Satan's Brew*

tively in conjunction with melodrama. To be sure, the connections are there, since melodrama, kitsch, and camp all trade in excessive style and exaggerated performance, with objects and props taking precedence over characters—who are de-psychologized to the point of being objects anyway. All three combine heavy-handed artifice with intense affect.

It is also easy to see how stylistic and affective excesses like campiness have been used to denigrate melodrama or to pathologize hysteria, whether as representational or psychological phenomena. Formally, melodrama and hysteria violate verisimilitudinous norms, but not towards overtly political ends; in other words, not for reasons that conform to the radical aesthetic agenda, say, of materialist filmmakers. The bias of the latter emerges from their modernist separation of high and low aesthetic forms and the tendency to disassociate "low forms" from political critique. Without wanting to reify those very divisions, I find it nevertheless significant that politically motivated minoritarian groups often deploy the so-called low representational strategies like melodrama, kitsch, and camp. For Sanders-Brahms and von Trotta, melodrama offered a way to explore women's social and representational relationships to history; Schroeter embraced kitsch; Treut and von Praunheim have been immersed in camp. The willingness to incorporate such styles *without* demurring from their sensational or denigrated

aspects suggests relationships to alterity not always in evidence in other representational strategies. It may even point to a new form of mourning. As Laurence Rickels and Judith Butler have argued, Freud used melancholia to explain the permanent loss of initial narcissistic attachments to the conscious ego, which must be heterosexualized at all costs and made to forget desires that might present obstacles to that task.[51] Lesbian and gay culture's turn to declarative, obstreperous events/representations defies that normative Oedipal scenario of repression and denial by giving expression to that-which-Freud-dared-not-name or -theorize.

MELANCHOLIA AND MELODRAMA: "SHAMELESS DISPLAY" AND UNEARNED SENTIMENT

It can be argued that hysterics, mourners, and melancholics are all people who remember too much. Specialists in the past, they are consummate historians. Yet only the mourner gets it right, by any conventional measure. For this reason, I believe that those who "get it wrong" may have more to offer. For melancholia acknowledges the impossibility of overcoming the past—and even questions the desirability of doing so. We might start by questioning its existence as mourning's dark, devalued other, with nothing but messed-up circuitry. How can we reexamine its representational assumptions and strategies? In emphasizing strategy over solution and process over conquest, melancholia shows the importance of stylization and the affective props and pieces involved. I believe that the mechanisms of melancholic style invite others into relationships with personal memory and history. That style, I contend, is a key component of "the melodramatic imagination."

For Freud, mourning and melancholia are prompted by similar kinds of losses (of people, places, ideals, potential);[52] what distinguishes them is the manner in which that loss is dealt with. In mourning, Freud avers, there is "nothing about the loss that is unconscious" (245), and because that loss is consciously perceived as separate from the self and the body-ego, the contours of the mourner's identity remain unquestioned. Thus, although the ego laments the departure of the lost object, it does not turn to self-deprecation; it is able to move beyond the loss ("We rely on its being *overcome* after a certain lapse of time " [243]), to move past the debilitating effects of grief. In this way, the ego is free to form new attachments, to "get past the past," one might say. The rhetoric of conquest and mastery Freud used to describe mourning (with reality "winning the day"; "overcoming" the loss) anticipates the language of the victor retained by the term *Vergan-*

genheitsbewältigung (see Introduction, note 1) and the vocabulary of punctures and breaks used in poststructuralist theories of excess.

By contrast, melancholia is a kind of failed mourning, a primal, inward-driven, narcissistic form of dealing with loss. Because the melancholic subject does not consciously grasp the lost experience or object, Freud maintains, the subject cannot separate the body-ego from the loss to which it is purportedly fused. Borders are blurred, and Freudians and non-Freudians alike point to the vagueness of melancholia's object as well as to the instability of its parameters (Günther Grass would refer to it as a utopian objectlessness).[53] Needless to say, this destabilizes boundaries of the ego as well. Unable to separate the self from this loss or negation, the melancholic experiences a diminishment of self unknown to the less distressed mourner. Understandably, melancholia provokes fiercely ambivalent responses from its sufferers, as is evident in the desultory outbursts of characters in *Holy Whore* and melodramas such as *Herr R* and *Merchant of Four Seasons*.

Feminists and others have justifiably taken Freud to task for opposing mourning and melancholia so reductively and judgmentally.[54] How can mourning be untainted by ambivalence or the unconscious? How can it leave ego-boundaries undisturbed, given how they are imbricated in all sorts of desires, attachments, contradictions, and proscriptions? Is melancholia such a tidy pathological other to mourning's "normal" means of coming to grips? Even Freud reveals some ambivalence on the matter, opening his essay with qualifying remarks that mourning and melancholia are but two ways of dealing with loss: they simply paint a "general picture" (243). At one point he maintains that "moral people" are more predisposed to melancholia (247) and that the "melancholic's access is *sharper than ours* [!] to a fundamental truth" (246), making it difficult indeed to pinpoint the norm that he claims to want.[55]

Mourning and melancholia are both lengthy endeavors. "We rely," Freud says about the former, "on its being overcome after a certain lapse of time " (244). Mourning, in other words, has a conclusion. No such happy ending lies in store for the melancholic, whose narrative contours are so unpredictable as to have no set timetables. Melancholics are condemned to repeated lamentations that cannot get past their object, nor at times even identify it. The serial format of Reitz's two televised *Heimats* intimates such a process, given its near-inability to conclude and the undirected nature of its longing. In a sense, melancholia and melodrama show that these processes *cannot* fully close, driven by this pointed lack of progress and goals and the seemingly infinite deferral of resolution. Without wanting to idealize these vicious circles, I believe that they nevertheless articulate the

representational effort of addressing the past more accurately than mourning's discourse of linearity and mastery.

Just as mourning and melancholia suggest different narrative patterns, each implies different relationships to style. One might visualize the mourner in culturally appropriate, respectable black attire and with restrained conduct, in contrast to the melancholic, prone to sullen, withdrawn moods or, antithetically, to outbursts, screaming, and exhibitionist display. In the New German Cinema, this is evident at the level of character behavior as well as film style. Recall the unmotivated eruptions of music-fragments punctuating texts like *Whore, Herr R*, or *Petra von Kant*. Does this suggest that style makes it easier for us to "hear" melancholy's appeals? This may be so, since *proper* mourning is inconspicuous by social necessity. Sustained in most North Atlantic cultures through religious ritual, respectful social distance and time frames, everything is explained, ceremonialized. Thus even in its private forms, mourning is conducted in *socially sanctioned* spaces of support. This is precisely what is denied to the melancholic, who must take recourse to more boisterous, deviant ways of demonstrating loss. Even Freud concedes the point: "It is really only because we know so well how to explain [mourning] that this attitude does not seem pathological" (243).

Rather than frame the artifice of a film like *Holy Whore* as "aberrations of mourning," we might consider it as a form of melancholic *refusal*. Consider how Freud describes melancholics:

> They are not ashamed and do not hide themselves, since everything that they say about themselves is at bottom said about someone else. . . . [T]hey make the greatest nuisance of themselves, and always seem as though they felt slighted and had been treated with great injustice. All this is possible only because the reactions expressed in their behaviour still proceed from a mental constellation of revolt, which has then, by a certain process, passed over in the crushed state of melancholia. (248)

Obviously melancholia is not the "crushed state" Freud claims, and the passage more than intimates that the melancholic's sense of self-worth is not as damaged as he elsewhere postulates. Freud continues:

> The melancholic does not behave in quite the same way as a person who is crushed by remorse and self-reproach in a normal fashion. Feelings of shame in front of other people, which would more than anything characterize this latter condition, are lacking in the melancholic, or at least they are not prominent in him. *One might emphasize the presence in him of an almost opposite trait of insistent communicativeness which finds satisfaction in self-exposure.* (247)

"Self-exposure" implies an externalization and introjection that Freud and others typically do not associate with melancholia. Moreover, the "insistent communicativeness" of the melancholic belies the claim that its bearer can only be narcissistic, or internally referential. As Fassbinder scholars like Elsaesser and Silverman have noted, Fassbinder's films extend extraordinary tolerance and lack of judgment to his figures, who usually make terrible mistakes and suffer terribly for them. If his texts make appeals to others-outside-the-text, their melodramatic framework only intensifies that appeal. The effect is heightened further by the inability (or unwillingness) of diegetic characters to respond to the cries of others.

PIECES, PROPS, AND PLAY

In spite of its incessant association with interiority, melancholia shows the weirdly communicative, stylized component of articulating grief—in short, its externalized dimension. An important aspect of its performative nature in relation to the New German Cinema can be explored through Santner's contention that "stranded objects," the sundry relics of Germany's war and postwar experience, function as transitional objects required in both mourning and melancholia. The seemingly excessive objects of melodrama and the New German Cinema thus provide "controlled symbolic doses of [poisonous] absence and renunciation,"[56] a way of dealing with grief comparable to the process of homeopathic medical treatment. Santner uses this to describe a specifically post-Nazi, post-Shoah context in which healing is a matter of process, not conquest. Although Santner does not put it in these terms, that is precisely what melancholia acknowledges, more openly than mourning. Given the shadow of Nazism's infamous "final solution," as Santner writes, "Mourning means to abandon the notion that alterity . . . requires a 'solution.' "[57]

Thus rather than working *through or past* loss, these substitutions and props allow subjects to move forward *with* loss. Given cinema's existence as physical images and sounds of substitutions, the idea has special relevance. To the extent that these substitutes are always not-the-object itself (in displaced foreign pop tunes, or in the striking resemblance of a photographic image), dealing with loss is an ongoing process. Its staging, in and out of the cinema, is abetted by transitional objects, the bits and pieces that stand in for what is "missing": the lost object, desire, a sense of wholeness, Being, the Real. Objects function like interruptions or substitutions put into play after entry into an Oedipal, symbolically bounded field. Within this field, props, symbols, and fetishes are freighted with

meaning, and Santner rightly notes their prominence within the Nazi iconography of postwar German film.

Klaus Theweleit emphasized much the same thing in his work on the Freikorps subject, for whom the protection of ill-established bodily borders from "undifferentiated miasma" was pivotal. (The Freikorps were a right-wing vigilante militia formed in reaction to Germany's defeat in the First World War.) Theweleit's infamous Freikorps subject took pleasure from the degradation of objects and other externalized "others," since their destruction was necessary to construct and maintain his own subjectivity. Theweleit argues that identity can be externally supported in the form of what he calls a borrowed social ego, fused onto the Freikorps subject like armor. The military uniform offered one external boundary to hold identity in place, an observation easily extended to a film like *Der Letze Mann* / *The Last Laugh* (Murnau, 1924), or Petra von Kant's frequently changed wigs. Theweleit borrows Michael Balint's concept of ocnophilia, "a term containing notions of dread, hesitation, terror, 'clinging,'" illustrating it with objects like a clenched jaw, or the riding whip Hitler always carried with him.[58] These objects are rather like successors to Winnicott's transitional objects, and Theweleit intimates, in referring to the Freikorps man as being a "not yet subject," that ocnophiliac behavior is an instance of failed mourning. With its investment in partial identifications and restagings, melancholia refuses the illusion of completion. To suggest that that option is undertaken by both Freikorps soldiers and concentration camp survivors shows that repudiating wholeness is not an act with guaranteed political consequences or causes. As Parveen Adams notes, although the objects with which we identify might be "traded in" and "judged, according to political calculations," to be "better" (by identifying with a maternal rather than paternal signifier, for example), ultimately they don't matter so much as the subject's relationship to them.[59] For instance, *The Merchant of Four Seasons*' opera recording becomes an object into which the notion of completion is placed, performing a phallic function in providing the illusion of a stable, normative identification for the subject. These objects become intermediaries between one subject and those that might witness him or her. They also offer glimpses into the subject's relationship to memory and history.

OCNOPHILIA AND *CHINESE ROULETTE*

Chinese Roulette is a movie of objects and games tailored to Santner's and Theweleit's analyses. Angela is the crippled daughter of haut-bourgeois parents who are both having affairs. She brings them together for a retreat in their country chateau, knowing that they are unaware that the other will be there with their lover as well. Fassbinder and Michael Ball-

haus capture the action through vertiginous camera movements that encircle characters gathering for cocktails, gravitating around the liquor and stereo cabinet as if it were an elaborate plexiglass shrine. Drinks, glasses, mirrors, dildos: the film is filled with objects of identity on the skids. Although the story line concentrates on familial and not national conflicts, the two are occasionally collapsed (at one point, Angela tells her mute governess, Traunitz, that her grandfather should have been a military victor). Angela's parents refer to their daughter as a "monster" and say they want to kill her, and her mother displaces that rage onto Traunitz, whom she shoots at the end of the film. Before this, the family's calamitous history culminates in the playing of the vicious parlor game adored by Angela, Chinese Roulette. Once Traunitz is shot, plot and image recede into a sort of common vanishing point. The final scene shows the outside of the estate in long shot, with a procession moving past. Wedding vows are written over this image (with "till death do you part?" evoking the chilling story on which *Martha* was based). The musical vocals begin and end with a male tenor performing "Kyrie Eleison," which usually inaugurates a mass but is placed here at the very end of the film.

Performing a mass after the attempted murder of one character and the shooting of another has a perverse logic, to be sure. Yet religious ritual or form has no place in this houseful of people, despite their misleadingly celestial names, like Angela and Gabriel. Throughout the film, musical appearances are as deceiving as these people. It is nonetheless curious that the vicious, ironic world of *Chinese Roulette* features one of Fassbinder's more elaborate, sensual soundtracks. The score is littered with choirs, the electronic music of Kraftwerk, symphonic vocals, generic "thriller" film music, a central theme that's repeated several times, and an extended, compositionally varied piece during the Chinese Roulette game itself. Yet for all this acoustic display, and again as Angela warns the groundskeeper Gabriel, "eavesdroppers often hear the wrong truths," the film's soundtrack generates the same epistemological, emotional, and moral uncertainty as its mirror-studded image track.

The drinking glasses clung to and tossed about in *Chinese Roulette* or *Beware of a Holy Whore* (like Dorothy Malone hugging papa's oil rig model at the conclusion of Sirk's *Written on the Wind* [1957]) establish that melodrama and its ocnophiliac props are born of a melancholic economy wherein they can only gesture towards resolution with the past, not provide it. In "successful" mourning, by contrast, these objects would disperse the affect associated with loss in order to stabilize the wounded human identity. Yet here we see that that kind of conclusiveness is illusory at best.

INTROJECTION AND INCORPORATION

Critics have compared Freud's notion of mourning to Maria Torok and Nicolas Abraham's concept of introjection. Introjection copes with loss by extending autoerotic cathexes outward towards it, thereby extending the self as well. (Like Freud, Torok and Abraham deploy the rhetoric of conquest—claiming that the self "advances, takes over, assimilates" the object.) Introjection includes the *instincts and desires attached to the object*—the emotions, relations with it, not just the object or loss itself—an observation one might equally make about melodrama, whose worlds are inhabited by so many over-invested, overwrought "things, not people."[60]

Opposed to that is incorporation, a process construed as a sort of failed introjection, just as Freud established melancholia as unsuccessful mourning. Here, in trying to identify with the object, the self internalizes it, seals it off, and disguises it—encrypting it, as Torok and Abraham put it. Jacques Derrida discusses this inauthenticity as follows: "I pretend to keep the dead alive, saved inside me . . . but it is only in order to refuse . . . to love the dead as a living part of me."[61] The ego splits, burying the object alive, refusing to mourn it through this psychic mummification. Thus while incorporation may go through the motions of introjection and *adopt its superficial signs*, as Torok and Abraham describe it, it is not the real thing because it cannot extend outwards. Important here are the means by which it "adopts" "superficial signs," a description that suggests that there is no direct recourse to "the real thing," just artifice and attempts. Clinically speaking, melancholia shares that pathological status, particularly in terms of its inability to distinguish borders (sealing, encryptment) of the self; it also shares its psychic and emotional intensity, its stylized articulation ("superficial signs") and presentations of such attachments, its uncontrolled diversions from "reality"—again, recalling aspects of melodramatic representation. Yet the way that melancholia (and melodrama) depend upon embodiment suggests to me that the encryptment of introjection does not fully explain the process. Interestingly, melancholia (and melodrama) elaborates some of the *incorporative* processes of extending attachments outwards into discursive situations.

Rather than completely externalize the object (as in classical mourning and introjection) or incorporate it, the melancholic representation I am considering restages the oscillation between the two. It externalizes that which the subject has tried to incorporate by placing it into exhibitionistic cycles, requiring someone to be there to see or hear it. Put into the realm of historical representation, the stakes in the process are high. Objects become the means by which a past/lost object/absence is invoked (along with

the affect these things might generate) and presented to another. The cinema's closeness to this historical and psychic process is made clear in Derrida's description of incorporation as "fantasmatic, unmediated, instantaneous, magical, sometimes hallucinatory."[62] This new form of melancholia avoids the depth models that point back to generative causes, as hysteria does, suggesting instead a complex relay of past and present events and their restagings. (In *Merchant*, for instance, scenes with Hans's mother are interspersed with flashbacks of her scolding him; scenes with his wife are interrupted by idealized visions of his lost lover; flashbacks appear of Hans being erotically whipped by a man of color during his service abroad.) What this underscores is that even the most profound losses are at one remove, displaced or replaced through representation and style. The process of symbolizing grief and acting it out—in the pretense of its conquest, or performing a new identity—is constantly being staged in Fassbinder's melodramas. Consider the pop music diegetically "put on" in *Holy Whore*, a film that makes clear that no subjectivity is motivating the choice of records. As we shall see, even the cameos of Peer Raben are important in this game of referential interplays (his name is to a degree also "put on"—Raben's birth name is Wilhelm Rabenbauer and he is known to his friends as Willi).

Because melancholia presents itself as an ongoing process and not a solution to loss, Freud's characterization of mourning as a conscious act and melancholia as an unconscious, narcissistic one becomes difficult to sustain. Santner writes of the conscious, "lucid melancholy" of postwar intellectuals who have adopted its elegiac tone,[63] and I have stressed the illusory nature of the closure promised by mourning work. Interestingly, Freud repeatedly asserts that his study "Mourning and Melancholia" is itself incomplete, and "call[s] to a halt" and "postpone[s] any further explanation . . . til the outcome of some other enquiry can come to its assistance" (258). By concluding his essay on these words, Freud proves that mourning work defies the clear-cut closure upon which he otherwise insists.

It is not my intention to celebrate melodramatic representation, nor to argue that it is fundamentally more effective than other forms at presenting stories of history and loss. The point is rather to question the received notion that melodrama is by default too cheap, reductive, American, or inappropriate to tackle historically charged issues. (Anglo-American film scholars in the 1980s may have dispensed with that bias only to construct melodrama at the other extreme, as a "subversive" piece of mass culture.) When all is said and done, the claims for melodrama seem about as ambivalent as the emotional push and pull of its stories. Clearly the Young

German Cinema's early condemnation of the genre—and directors' subsequent embrace of it—was not altogether different from Freud's pathologization of melancholia. Melodrama and melancholia were too excessive, too feminine, too "cheap," too formulaic, and too disrespectful of (a masculinized) reality—recall Freud's reference to the realness of the mourner's losses and that "normally, respect for reality wins the day" (244). Suspicious of codes of verisimilitude and the veracity of cinematic sound or image, directors of the New German Cinema also distrusted the sense of a normative reality "that wins the day." In the same way, melodrama and melancholia's eschewal of realism is not a disregard for social or historical contingencies so much as proof of their inability to capture them. As Peggy Phelan puts it, "[A] believable image is the product of a negotiation with an unverifiable real," and as such, it can never reproduce the totality of any particular reality.[64]

INSATIABLE AFFECT

> [Fassbinder] deployed filmic means to create a very specific form of "historical" memory, among which his use of melodrama and violent juxtaposition of contrasts, sentimental pop songs and improbable coincidences have a strategically important place. Thus, the "effects of melodrama, sentimentality and prurience" form a part of Fassbinder's aesthetic and moral universe, prompting the question of whether they do not in his work constitute "limits" which any discussion of representation may have to confront, including one that wants to approach German Fascism, Auschwitz, and the relationship between Germans and Jews. For what terms such as melodrama signify, however much they may be coloured by negative judgements of taste and decorum, is an affectivity, and therefore an aspect of subjectivity crucial not just to the cinema. These emotions, one could argue, ought to legitimately belong to any engagement with matters of life and death, on the part of those to whom history has given the role of readers or spectators [and auditors], but also for those who are charged with passing on compassion and preserving memory.[65]

This extended passage comes from Thomas Elsaesser's 1996 *Fassbinder's Germany*, his swan-song study of the director whose passing fourteen years prior had critics ringing the death knell of the movement at large. Wolfram Schütte's famous obituary used somatic terms that effectively transformed a disperse movement into a single body—mimicking how melodramas were being read as "body-texts" at the time:

> Alexander Kluge would be its synthesising intelligence, Werner Herzog its athletic will, Wim Wenders its phenomenological power of perception.

> Werner Schroeter emphatically underscores its emotional side, Herbert Achternbusch is its rebellious stubbornness, and Volker Schlöndorff its craftsman. Rainer Werner Fassbinder, however, would be the heart, the beating, vibrant centre of all these partial impulses, these different aggregate states of its energy. . . . He was the pounding heart. Now it has been stopped.[66]

The publication of Elsaesser's book coincided with what was basically the death of melodrama as a hot object of study in cinema studies. There as well the topic seemed to have run its course. Folks had had their say; some seemed embarrassed for their indulgent "readings against the grain," for having espoused radical politics, for failing to consider melodramatic traditions outside North Atlantic cultures, and for downplaying historical and institutional contexts. For whatever reasons, melodrama had suddenly become as unfashionable as the New German Cinema.[67] In view of that shift, Elsaesser's assertion that Fassbinder's cinematic world view was "essentially melodramatic" is striking. [68]

As his earlier reference to proper decorum reveals, critics closely scrutinize cinematic style when the topic of an appropriate means of representing and addressing the past is raised, particularly when the past is Germany's. Affect and emotions play large roles in these debates, particularly when the supposedly more "tasteless" forms and styles of melodrama, hysteria, and kitsch are involved. This is not the kind of emotion that comes from identifying with characters, but rather the kind that arises from the melancholic strategies that simultaneously encourage and deny our affective responses. As Elsaesser argues, they show that even at their most unruly and distasteful, emotions and desire instigate our involvement with our memories and with those of other people. Since these desires, and the pasts with which they are involved, do not go away (for desire always exceeds its object), objects are all that's left to work with. Hence Fassbinder's admiration for making films "about things, not people" is a bit misleading, since it is only through "things" that people are made.

Psychoanalytic theorists of film spectatorship in the 1970s and 1980s did not put emotion and affect on the table for discussion. Surprisingly, this also characterized melodrama scholarship of the time. Ever the good modernist soldiers, academics distrusted people's emotional connections to film texts, arguing that emotional involvement meant depreciated analytical abilities, and a lack of critical "distance." To this day, melodrama's affective features, as well as those of cinema more generally, remain undertheorized.[69] The relationship between emotions and bodies is significant here for, as Linda Williams observes, emotionalism is often associated with the

physical responses of filmgoers in the form of tears, stimulation, or fear.[70] For Paul Coates, melodrama can even bring us to the point of physical shock, a point I will develop in the next chapter. The following is the full citation in which his remarks appear:

> Melodrama is set clearly apart from tragedy through its dependence on the sensation of shock—and on shock to induce sensation per se. In tragedy all the reversals and catastrophes grow logically out of the original dramatic material. In melodrama, however, they arrive unexpectedly: Disaster is not precipitated by profoundly rooted character traits . . . or the deep structures of reality [e.g., myth] but by purely fortuitous events. . . . If tragic events unfold with the appearance of inevitability, the accidental nature of melodramatic occurrences implies that things could always have been different. . . . It torments one with an excruciating sense of "if only *this* had not happened."[71]

Somatic though it may be, the sensation Coates describes is tied up with feelings more than anything else. That is what produces the "excruciating sense of 'if only *this* had not happened.' " Like most scholars of the New German Cinema, Coates does not idealize these hypothetical possibilities, for alternatives do not necessarily point to better or even desirable conditions. Indeed, the movement is renowned for constituting alternatives out of the very systems that oppress, as with the exploitative gay subculture of *Fox and His Friends* or the female pirates who adulate their tyrannical leader in *Madame X*. Ultimately the drive to find utopian "elsewhereness" is intensified because the New German Cinema produces few depictions of it. I believe that this is true for melodrama as well, as it searches for its utopias-that-never-could-have-been. As Gilberto Perez remarks apropos of Ophuls's *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, Joan Fontaine plays "a woman in love with an illusion that no reality can dispel."[72] But where Ophuls uses tragedy to expose the danger of that belief, Fassbinder does the same thing in *The Marriage of Maria Braun* through irony.

It should be noted that refusing to depict solutions is not the same thing as refusing their importance. As Coates states, "One of the consequences of melodrama's inevitability is its potential endlessness." When he goes on to note that "*melodrama's form is dictated by insatiability,*"[73] he reveals how close melodrama is to melancholia, whose personages are also dominated by the desire for things to have "happened differently." That desire is punched up all the more since it refuses to disappear and persists in boisterous displays.

When Santner addresses the "lucid melancholia" of postwar intelligentsia, he helps show that refusing to let go of the object is not always a

pathological act. It can be deliberate, defiant, and productive. To be sure, social and historical circumstances can converge to dictate when losses are *not* to be confronted, as Butler and Rickels note in relationship to Freudian psychoanalysis's attempts to "lose" same-sex desire. One wonders, though, if melancholia's objects are so deeply hidden, whether the attachments to them weren't more profoundly experienced in the first place. Kathleen Woodward makes just this point about photographic portraits as images of people we loved but who now are gone. Like the daughter in *Malou*, we return to them, but our repetitious viewings are not fully explained by unconscious motives: what of deliberate, conscious, acts of melancholia? As Woodward describes Roland Barthes's extraordinarily melancholic *Camera Lucida*, written shortly after the death of his mother, "The book itself embodies a resistance to mourning which entails a kind of willed refusal to relinquish pain."[74] In other words, what if the lost object is *worth* preserving? What if the memory we are talking about pertains to the Shoah?

THE ABILITY TO HEAR

Clearly this approach to mourning and melancholia is distinct from forms of psychoanalytic analysis that relate films back to the psyche of their director (such as Syberberg's conflicted nostalgia) or a nation (allegories of arrested development in *The Tin Drum*), or even the "body" of the text (the hysterical model). Equally clear is the fact that we are describing more than private, psychic events. After the war, conditions were simply not such that Germans could readily mourn their complicity with Nazism, especially since the auratic super-gaze of the latter had simply been appropriated by American occupiers.[75] By the time of the New German Cinema, however, an affirmative social space was widening, and filmmakers used very public venues like theatres, television, and discussions to stage the processes of exploring the past rather than resolving it. Thus German films of the time exhibit less an *inability* to mourn than an elaborate apparatus with which to do so.

Melodrama's generic obsession with past events, losses, missed opportunities, and abuse—and the possibility of acknowledging these histories in others—dramatize the work involved in the process of listening to other people. In the films I have examined here, the material self-consciousness of the scores counters the tradition that banks on music's abstractness or transcendence. Its minimized role heightens our awareness of its detachment from the idea of emotional "authenticity." Again, this is not to withdraw emotions *from* these scores, but to suggest that their obstreperous physicality turns them into *demands to be heard*.

Bearing in mind how important it is for someone to listen to and witness the memories of others, even modest details like the small parts Fassbinder played in his films (from *Holy Whore* to *Lili Marleen*—or his starring role in *Fox*) and Raben's cameos as musical characters (the music teacher in *Four Seasons,* a pianist in a bar in *Malou,* a nightclub bandleader in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*) become charged with significance. Through them we recognize that these sounds and images were created by historical subjects who are made present to us by being stagily placed in the films. By physically taking places in their own work, Raben and Fassbinder become ideal melodramatic characters, discursive space-holders. In other words, and in contrast to the inward-directed narcissism Freudians use to explain melancholia, these types of performances establish a social, outwardly directed space for others to whom the performances are geared, just as melodrama requires an empathetic jury to confer legitimacy on characters or situations at hand.

I have been stressing that we can characterize melodrama and the New German Cinema in terms of a working-out of the past, one considered to be an irrepressible force upon the text. And if in the 1980s melodrama critics accounted for this by invoking the structures of hysteria, in hindsight one sees that the psychoanalytic model that might offer more exegetical force is that of melancholia. This is not to replace one psychological condition with another, but to suggest a different representational modality altogether. Unlike melodrama and hysteria, melancholic representation is not intent on reproducing a lost or rediscovered truth, or in expressing something from within the depths of a clearly defined subject. Instead it suggests that those things are impossible to begin with. Playing with that impossibility, melancholia leaves us with the distance and differences from what its lost objects, histories, and fantasies might have offered.

If, as André Bazin, Susan Sontag, and Roland Barthes have argued, a photograph works as a ghostly representation people use to hold on to lost people, events, and objects, music cannot "fix" its object to begin with, and that sense of haunting becomes all the more difficult to pinpoint.[76] Similarly, melancholia involves "a sense of disappointment over something which was never received."[77] Here, instead of pathologizing melancholia, as Michael Schneider sees it, we can view it as a strategy of identificatory survival, however utopian its actualization would be. But since nothing exists of the melancholic object in the first place except as identificatory possibility, it cannot be received or given stable articulation, like utopian thought. To pretend that its losses can be so easily managed is absurd. Equally problematic is the effort to freeze melancholia as an aberrant condition: it is more reasonable to reconsider it, and the utopias toward which it fumbles, as key players in the "melodramatic imagination."

Thus we can approach lost objects as a means of reworking the everyday, moving towards new ways of chronicling our experience. One of melodrama's contributions has been in offering the possibility of rereading our everyday existence historiographically, a sort of *Alltagsgeschichte*. Elsaesser goes so far as to call melodrama the "literary equivalent of a . . . mode of experience."[78] By narrativizing the past through the everyday, melodrama usually creates the sense of a perpetual present. Yet the New German Cinema knew no such perpetual present; instead it showed that the present could only be read through the past. To elaborate, I return to the film with which this chapter began.

The melodramatic aspects of postwar German cinema suggest that the objects of the everyday, our own histories and identity, are never our own in the first place—much like the pre- and post-recorded voices and music of films like *Anna Magdelena Bach*, *Ticket of No Return*, and *Germany, Pale Mother*. Melancholia's exhibitionist tendencies arguably proceed from that same tension. Even as we see the "Made in Germany" inscribed in flamboyant, Gothic letters on the rock at the beginning of Reitz's *Heimat*, their home-grown authenticity is put into question: how can a sense of nation or national history possibly remain natural in such a heavy-handed detail? Why is identity still being configured as part of the German soil? The film is self-conscious acoustically as well, with its manufactured sounds, which are often indistinguishable from "natural" or diegetic sounds (birds, trees); music is frequently ominous and unstable rhythmically.

As *Heimat*'s lumbering, rustic chronicle begins, its focus on the everyday is immediately crystallized by the first title: "May 9, 1919: A Friday." Subsequent "year-chapters" are inaugurated by a variety of photographs, family trees, and other souvenirs arranged by the film's diegetic narrator—just like Syberberg's *Parsifal*, which also opens as a museum of visual clutter: photographs of performances, buildings, ruins, and other frozen mementos. *Heimat*'s soundtrack offers a similar assemblage of parts, mixing, among other things, national anthems, Protestant hymns, and synthesized music. What does sound do here? It seems to extend the promise of escape, at least to the character Paul Simon (an intriguing allusion to U.S. pop music). Through his early experiments with radio technology in the 1920s, Simon believes he can transcend his native Hunsrück. Of course, that "transcendence" is utterly dependent on the material aspects of technology and in fact, at the end of the film, Paul's company is bought out by multinationals. Reitz's depiction of transnational capital suggests that the sounds and sights of the everyday really cannot be authenticated as "German" or possessed by any one owner. American pop songs in *Sugarbaby*,

Petra von Kant, and *The American Friend* dramatize this same large-scale cultural colonization. In *The American Friend*, Dennis Hopper sings a snippet of a tune made famous in his U.S. cult film, *Easy Rider* (1969). The refrain of the Byrds' "I Wasn't Born to Follow" americanizes him as actor, icon, and character. A cowboy of capitalism, Hopper is hardly his own man, even if he is able to convince Bruno Ganz's character—a clear allegory for Germany at the time—that he is mortally ill.

Music in the New German Cinema offers little in the way of fixity, stability, or access to utopia, be that access direct, as with Hollywood musicals, or deferred, as in melodramas. In this way, the melodramas of the New German Cinema externalized the "inward turn" discussed by McCormick and others in relation to the *Neue Subjektivität* movement. The interiority and subjectivity associated with it were tacitly assumed by melodrama's Anglo-American critics as well, using the hysterical exegetic model to "turn inward" in order to excavate meanings (subversive or not) *within or behind* textual bodies. Although I am no more interested in placing cinematic meanings "on the surface" than I am in finding them within the deep structural recesses of the text, the issue of externalization remains critical. For outward exhibitions are intertwined with subjectivity, and "excessive," melancholic acts are attempts to negotiate identity and structure relationships to other people through objects, props, and sounds.

Scholars of both melodrama and New German Cinema have justifiably stressed these films' lack of faith in the power of human vision (and hearing). Yet rather than retreat from displays of looking or hearing, these films give sights and sounds hyperbolic, concrete presentation. The "shameless display" of melancholia is thus a representational strategy based not on expressivity but on the concrete, externalized expression of melancholia's "utopian objectlessness," to recall Grass's remark. By sweeping characters into the realm of objects, Fassbinder's appreciation of Sirk for making "movies about things, not people" shows the extent to which such "things" are the materials out of which stories and histories are made.

2 Modernism's Aftershocks

Peer Raben's Film Music for Fassbinder

> Music admits that the fate of the world no longer depends on the individual, but it also knows that this individual is capable of no content except his own, however fragmented and impotent. Hence his fractures are the script of truth. In them the social movement appears negatively, as in its victims.
>
> —THEODOR ADORNO

Adorno wrote these words about Gustav Mahler, but they describe the collaborative work between Raben and Fassbinder with eerie prescience. Adorno maintained that Mahler moved beyond musical expressionism, subjectivity, tragedy, and unity, not for the sake of novelty, nor even for a modernist jolt, but out of a larger, general fatigue that was passionate yet, as is commonly said of Mahler, ironic. The style of his symphonic movements, for instance, *repudiated* fantasies of symphonic wholeness while simultaneously acknowledging their allure. Thus Mahler's music conveys "the truth of the unattainable"—another comment that describes Fassbinder and Raben well.[1] Others construct Mahler quite differently, as the apotheosis of romantic decadence and kitsch.[2]

Like Mahler, Raben has been criticized for his simple, even kitschy compositions, a point film music scholar Norbert Jürgen Schneider refutes. "Before the listener even realises it," he writes, "the simple themes become complex collages with sophisticated harmony and bi-tonality, and Peer Raben's music completely overtakes [the idea of] 'film music.' "[3] My aim is not to compare Raben and Mahler, even if the frequent appearance of the latter in Fassbinder's films makes such a project tempting.[4] Yet the historical contexts of the two composers reveal interesting parallels. Mahler ambivalently straddled the brink of modernity (and musicologist Romain Goldron argues that the conductor/composer was consummately aware of his position as a "counter-

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force" on that cusp.)[5] Raben straddled, in much the same way, the precipice of postmodernism. In fact, Raben may be *more* the musical modernist than Mahler, for, unlike his predecessor (whose obsession with death and despair is legendary), Raben offers a cautious hope for change that recalls pre–World War II modernism more than it does contemporary postmodernism.

In a 1995 talk, Raben argued that film music should function as a series of "shocks."[6] The aim of the "Musik-Shock" for him was "to support something that isn't yet in the image, nor in the mind either, that isn't yet *true*."[7] For any serious listener of his compositions or his treatment of existing music, the claim makes immediate sense. Early in *The Marriage of Maria Braun*, for instance, "O du schöner Westerwald" (Maas), a soldiers' song popular during the Nazi era, is played in a deliberately childish manner on xylophones and glockenspiels as Maria walks through a room filled with athletic equipment. Our ears are privy to the life choices she will be making (naively) over the course of the film; it also testifies to the regressive power such choices have over her (Raben says it was played this way to suggest that the character was recalling her childhood at this point). By deliberately infantalizing a Nazi-era song that would be familiar to German audiences of the time, Raben disabused it of any nostalgic potential or sense of childhood innocence that it may have purveyed. To hear this kind of a melody played like this is, quite simply, a shock.

The modernist notion of shock—in particular, an aesthetic shock that puts reworked forms into new contexts—has been articulated in a number of ways. For Shlovsky, it was part of *ostranenie*; for Brecht, a *Verfremdungseffekt*; and, at the other end of modernism's political spectrum, shock followed Ezra Pound's imperative to "make it new." For members of the New German Cinema like Raben, Kluge, Straub/Huillet, and others, the connection to modernist aesthetics is as important as it is nonincidental. Yet commentators have downplayed the movement's ties to modernism by focusing on its more obvious investment in the war and postwar periods, and to the projects of *Trauerarbeit* and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.

This chapter examines how New German Cinema was marked by the interwar years when European modernism flourished. As Kluge has said, "I wouldn't be making films if it weren't for the cinema of the 1920s, the silent era. Since I have been making films it has been in reference to this classical tradition."[8] The figures and texts of this generation, once removed from the New German filmmakers, have proved to be as crucial as those of their parents' time. There are the remakes of films from the 1920s (*Mother Kusters, Nosferatu, Berlin Alexanderplatz*); the reworking of period icons (*Anita: Dances of Vice, Tenderness of the Wolves, Lola*); the authenticating of forebears (Eisner for Herzog, Vertov and Brecht for Kluge, von Horváth[9] for

Fassbinder). These were the good grandparents, members of the Opaskino with whom children of the "fatherless society" seemed desperate to reconnect. Miriam Hansen pushes Kluge's clock back even further, noting his penchant for techniques of early cinema. Other modernist-influenced techniques include Fassbinder's near-Eisensteinian typage of characters; the anti-illusionist mise-en-scènes of Ottinger, Schroeter, and Syberberg; the expressionist camerawork of Elfi Mikesch. Moreover, many of these techniques have come to be associated with an explicitly politicized modernism.[10]

SHOCK, MUSIC, AND MODERNISM

Because the concept of shock saturates European modernist discourse until the end of the interwar period, it is not surprising that critics and other cultural workers were drawing connections between the arts and the "shell-shock" of World War I. (That framework recalls the argument that the Great War swept Europe's aesthetic slate clean, purging it of nineteenth-century excesses like romanticism, or banal bourgeois tastes like realism.) Shock was a crucial piece of what is widely understood to be modernity's larger oppositional project. For critic Peter Bürger, Russian formalism was one movement in which "shocking the recipient becomes the dominant principle of artistic intent."[11] Picasso: "Art and liberty, like the fire of Prometheus, are things one must steal, to be used against the established order." Of course, moral shocks and the shock of bad taste were key to the effects of Duchamp, Grosz, and even Picasso. But it was the brute *physicality* of shock, its material sources and somatic effects, that was instrumental to modernists from Eisenstein, who wanted to wire his viewers to their seats, to Marinetti, who enthused over death drives in sexualized cars. Peer Raben seems to descend from this tradition by advocating a provocative use of music that jolts the filmgoer, stating, "When you watch a film there's a riot [going on] in your brain that's not just psychological but physical."[12]

Whereas realist art used materials to appear as transparent as possible and create the illusion of life-likeness, shock, by contrast, abetted the modernist project of foregrounding these materials in order to provoke. This would lead some to align modernist shock with technology itself, be it the futurists' delight in war's destructive machines or Benjamin's guarded hope that film would habituate consumers to the jolts of modernity. Shock's intense materiality, whether from leftists like Eisenstein and Benjamin or proto-fascists like Marinetti, was crucial for its purported ability to impart alternative new worlds to consumers. To take only cinematic examples, consider the widespread vocabulary of attractions, conflict, colli-

sion, physical sensation, the sensory stimuli of both fairground and city, the jolts of industrialization and modernization (prominent noncinematic examples of the time include the "blasts" of British vorticism and Jünger's *Man of Steel*). Shock was, moreover, central to modernism's dual project of instruction and amazement—something articulated especially in its more popular, mass-produced forms. But the brutal polemics of shock also participated in the larger "rhetoric of hyperbolized negativity" that Thomas Levin observes in political modernist discourse of the period.[13] Shock, like modernism itself, was a multi-faceted, contradictory phenomenon.

Critics and artists often perceived shock to be both produced *by* and productive *of* textuality. At once cause and effect, symptom and response, it seemed a constitutive part of an aesthetics that wanted to disrupt conventional perception, cognition, and emotional engagement. The idea was in keeping with modernism's goals of overturning the realist, illusionistic aesthetic of nineteenth-century bourgeois art—or of adapting it to a changed technological, socio-political climate, or using art as an ideological corrective to mass-produced forms of the twentieth century. It is worth noting that, unlike Eisenstein, Peter Bürger didn't believe shock could be wired in or predicted, particularly on a large scale, a point that would be echoed by Fassbinder and Raben. For him, shock was enmeshed in a fundamental meaninglessness and emptiness—lacks that will also prove significant with Fassbinder and Raben. "This refusal to provide meaning is experienced as shock by the recipient," Bürger writes, going on to say that "shock is aimed for as a *stimulus* to change one's conduct of life; it is the means to break through aesthetic immanence and to usher in (initiate) a change in the recipient life practice."[14]

THE ART OF NOISE

It would be a commonplace to note that, even by omission, shock was most commonly linked to vision, availing potentially radicalized ways of seeing. Such was the case for European intellectuals and artists as diverse as Benjamin and Heartfield, Kracauer and Breton. Even Ernst Bloch, advocate of music's utopian expressiveness, maintained that "visual montage [would be] an appropriate vehicle for representing utopianism since its juxtaposition of fragments . . . provid[e] multiple jumping off points in the present from which to imagine a better future."[15] In his preface to a 1990s book on montage and modernity, Matthew Teitelbaum uses similar language, writing that "montage practice sought not merely to represent the real . . . but, also, to extend the idea of the real to something not yet seen [or even see-

able]."[16] How far is this remark from Raben's assertion that musical practice can reveal that which is "not yet true?"

It would thus be wrong to dissociate modernist shocks and visual techniques like montage from new ways of hearing. Modernist critics, composers, and filmmakers alike all valued music and sound's capacity to disrupt conventional listening patterns. Hanns Eisler advocated "choral montage," and his enthusiasm for music's connection to modern technology is evident in his pride for having composed what he called "blast furnace music" for a Soviet film.[17] Countless examples from the time had music function as a sort of mimetic mouthpiece of the shiny, new machinery of modernity. That tendency finds its most extreme articulation in Italian futurism, the technophilia of which is legendary. In 1913, futurist painter Luigi Russolo championed "the crashing down of metal shop blinds . . . the variety of din from stations, railways, iron foundries, spinning mills. . . . [E]very factory will be transformed into an intoxicating orchestra of noises."[18] Futurist musician Francesco Balilla Pratella praised "the musical soul of crowds, great industrial complexes . . . the domination of the machine and the victorious reign of electricity."[19] Other examples include Stravinsky's remark that music functioned best when it ran like a sewing machine,[20] or Kurt Weill's that "my imagination is not a bird, it's an airplane."[21] There are George Antheil's compositions "Airplane Sonata" (1922) and "Ballet mécanique" (1925), the 1920 "Concert for Factory Sirens," in which factory sirens were orchestrated to call workers to their stations in the U.S.S.R.,[22] or the rhythmic fusion of cinema, trains, and music in Honegger/Mitry's somewhat later *Pacific 231* (1949).

Although Eisler, a life-long Communist Party member (and composer of the East German national anthem), may seem to lead the charge in advocating new musical forms and function as a part of larger socio-political transformations, other cultural workers and distributors[23] played important roles in attacking autonomous music, giving music a more significant place in filmmaking practice and redefining its very function. Music *had* to be changed. As Carl Dahlhaus writes in a different context, "Whereas music, in the form of church music, used to partake of religion as revealed in the 'Word,' it now, as autonomous music capable of conveying the 'inexpressible,' has become religion itself."[24]

MUSIC AND MODERNISM

Musicologists generally reserve the term "modernism" to describe the atonal experimentation of the 1910s. The leader of that movement, Arnold

Schoenberg, was, however, a fierce advocate of music's autonomous function and its need for trained ears to hear it. Thus, although "musical modernism" is historically framed this way and is usually associated with more exclusive practices, I retain the term "modernism" to describe developments occurring as late as 1933. For modernism's reactions to Expressionism and Romanticism—as well as to modernity and industrialization—preceded the 1910s and continued beyond then.[25] This is not to suggest a uniform landscape over that period; some composers rejected the autonomy embraced by Schoenberg or the perceived elitism in his twelve-tone system, turning to jazz and other popular forms.

Many German modernists believed that music should play an active, socially conscious, critical role. Paul Hindemith, for instance, wrote that contemporary music should be of "moral foundation."[26] His remark is in keeping with the *Neue Sachlichkeit* / *New Objectivity* linked to Hindemith and other composers, as well as painters, cineastes, and other German artists of the 1920s and early 1930s.[27] Though not a stylistically or even ideologically uniform movement,[28] the *Neue Sachlichkeit* generally affirmed urban culture, its surfaces, detached coolness, and technologies, much as Benjamin and Kracauer had cautiously held out hope for in the cinema. Society itself was perceived as a "city machine."[29] As Eisler asserted in 1928, "When you are composing and you open the window, remember that the noise of the street is not mere noise, but is made by man. . . . Choose texts and subjects that concern as many people as possible."[30] The outward focus of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* helped it militate against the emotional subjectivity of Expressionism, against the latter's obsession with psychic states outwardly expressed, only to point back to the special individualism "inside" the artist. Some factions of the movement were in favor of paring down aesthetic forms in favor of function (see below); some were pro-technology, others technophobes.

Closely tied to *Neue Sachlichkeit* was *Gebrauchsmusik*, whose aim, if it can be so singularized, was to democratize music, to wrest it from the hands of elite specialists, to compose it with real audiences in mind, and to educate and *widen* that audience through new technologies like the cinema, phonograph, and radio. For Hindemith, with whom the term was initially associated, *Gebrauchsmusik* aimed for a democratic society of musicians in Berlin, something impossible after the events of 1933. To close the breach between ostensibly high forms like opera or concert music and light, popular music, some composers utilized new forms of music and modes of transmission. There were the *Zeitoper*, short, topical operas which, according to Weill, exposed the "rhythm of our time,"[31] workers' choral music, film scores, radio music, *Schuloper*, and *Laienoper*. Normally translated as

"music for use," *Gebrauchsmusik* transformed ideas of the "beautiful" and "not beautiful" into questions of "useful and useless," to which Eisler later added that one should ask, "Useful for whom?"[32]

Kurt Weill tackled the two questions simultaneously. Even though Weill is not normally associated with radical critique—many consider his easy wartime assimilation into American culture sufficient evidence against that—he raised pertinent social issues and changed musical theater form, especially by incorporating different musical forms and styles, and in his unconventional instrumentation. Despite his occasional efforts in cinema and his early association with Brecht, however, he remains surprisingly underdiscussed in film and film music circles. It was he, for instance, who developed the notion of *gestus* that Brecht would borrow, and it was he who, like Raben after him, found in Mahler an important model (specifically for integrating popular folk forms into his music). Weill's career in Germany was well under way in the 1920s, and it flourished until the Nazis seized power, when his music was triply damned, for its purported decadence (e.g., its use of jazz and other "foreign" forms), its unflattering portrayals of contemporary conditions, and, not least, for the Jewishness of its composer.[33]

Weill shared Eisler's concern that "music for the people" not be modeled after the "hit," but he did not share his colleague's disdain for music's association with beauty. Instead, Weill believed that music could be enjoyable and still perform socially critical functions, much as Brecht advocated that pleasure and learning could coexist. One of Weill's clearest articulations of this interest is found in a letter to his sister Ruth, dated 28 January 1920, regarding an unfinished opera based on a one-act play by Ernst Hardt. He writes: "In this work I would want to give—and would want to achieve—only one thing: beauty. In addition to all of the beauty Hardt has already poured into it . . . it simply has to result in an exuberance of beauty when combined with the music I have in mind; if this succeeded, it could even become a model for an entirely new lyrical musico-dramatic creation."[34] Another passage, written in 1929, defends *Gebrauchsmusik*'s various forms from attacks on the alleged decay and "superficiality" of their "easily-comprehensive melodies," and emphasizes musical "pleasantness": "In the process the observer all too often overlooks that the effect of this music is not catchy, but instead rousing; that the intellectual bearing of this music is thoroughly serious, bitter, accusing, and in the most pleasant cases still ironic."[35]

Weill's interest in beauty and pleasure suggests the flip side of modernist shock, an idea to which I will be returning, and one which ultimately enables Weill to endure as a stronger prototype for Peer Raben and post-

war, politicized German film music culture in general than Eisler, who seems the more obvious choice.

FILM MUSIC AND SHOCK

There were reasons why *film* music seemed particularly suited to the task of the technologies of shock and dehabitualized perception. As Eisler put it, "By virtue of its character of immediacy—and music still possesses this character to a greater extent than any other art—it should stress the mediated and alienated elements in the photographed action and the recorded words, thus preventing confusion between reality and reproduction, a confusion that is all the more dangerous because the reproduction appears to be more similar to reality than it ever was."[36]

In this way, it is not insignificant that the considerable musical activity of the Weimar era often intersected with film culture, as with Hindemith's 1921 score for Arnold Franck's *Im Kampf mit dem Berg* / *Battling the Mountain* and Eisler's for *Kuhle Wampe*. A famous example outside of Germany was Eisenstein's celebrated collaboration with Prokofiev, and his theories that put music on par with other film elements. Even the very terms Eisenstein used to discuss cinema relied on music. He argued that music should be used "in contrapuntal style" to visual elements; he valued montage for the "music of its intonation," and wrote "without rhythm, montage would simply be the 'shapeless' sum of a succession of 'facts.'"[37] For him, distance between "intervals"[38] was crucial in creating shock-like violence: "There can be cases where the distance of separation is so wide that it leads to a break—to a collapse of the homogeneous concept of art."[39] Intrigued by Russian musical symbolism, Eisenstein wanted to blend cinematic "dominants" and "overtones and undertones" in ways inspired by Scriabin's "colorised" chromaticism, to produce a unity through synthesis.[40] Cinema's metaphoric adaptation of musical terminology is not restricted to Eisenstein by any means, nor to the 1920s,[41] even though these two art forms enjoyed a particularly intense relationship during the period.

If the proclamations of their own aesthetic principles are any indication, composers of the late 1910s and 1920s seemed fearful of driving away potential audiences, publishers, or sponsors by appearing *too* modern or shocking. Only the most polemical spoke out. The phenomenon may be partially explained by the populist aims of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*, whose members, as I have already noted, sometimes rejected modernity outright. Yet even the cautious Schoenberg wrote that he hoped his music "stimulates the brain or spinal cord . . . in its full severity," a somatic reference to

stimulus and shock with obvious resonance.[42] In the end, however, it is Hanns Eisler who supplies the most direct articulation of conflict and shock, and does so, significantly, in speaking on film music: "Only by using the element of surprise can the motion picture give everyday life, which it claims to reproduce by virtue of its technique, an appearance of strangeness, and disclose the essential meaning beneath its realistic surface."[43]

His most widely known argument for film music, of course, was to place it in opposition to the image, a "conflict" that provided "commentary" rather than redundancy. The idea carried over into Eisler's overall theory of music, one enriched by Adorno: "Music can only develop in the contradictory relationship of music to society. Whoever does not understand that is a blockhead, no matter how clever he is."[44] Developing this admittedly questionable correspondence between formal aesthetic practice and socio-ideological opposition, Eisler describes his work for *Kuhle Wampe:* "Deteriorated houses on the edge of the city, slum district in all its misery and filth. The mood of the image is passive, depressing: it invites melancholy. Counterposed to that is fast-paced, sharp music, a polyphonic prelude, marcato style. The contrast of the music . . . to the straightforward montage of images creates a shock that, according to the intention, stimulates opposition more than sympathetic sentimentality."[45] His score for *Abdul Hamid* (Gune, 1935) revealed another kind of opposition: the patriotic "Hymn to the Sultan" appears just as Hamid is beating his own soldiers. Years later, Kluge would deploy the same technique, taking the movement from Haydn's "Kaiserhymn" on which "The Deutschlandlied" was based in the same ironic, antinationalist vein.

Peer Raben's work involves much the same recontextualization of existing music, a term I select over "recycling" because of the frequency with which meanings derail, often humorously, sometimes ominously. Consider Fassbinder's televised series *Berlin Alexanderplatz,* set in the late 1920s just prior to the Nazi seizure of power. At the end of the fourteen-hour film (of which eight were fully scored—an unusually high ratio), we hear "The Internationale," the workers' anthem by Eugène Pottier, which then fades into the Nazis' beloved "Horst Wessel Lied" (1933), subtly but ominously clinching Franz Biberkopf's future with the party. It is interesting to compare this with the song used at the beginning of the film and of each installment (it also appears diegetically whenever Franz plays it on his phonograph). It is "Liebe kleine Nachtigall" (Sweet Little Nightingale), performed by the Jewish singer Richard Tauber. (Tauber left Germany in 1933 for Austria, which he subsequently fled in 1938.)[46] By inaugurating the series with a popular song sung by a popular Jewish singer and by closing on the "Horst

Wessel Lied," Raben creates a musical bookend that mimics the political, social, and personal shifts undergone by Franz Biberkopf in the story.[47]

Nazi songs do not occur all at once at the end of the film, however. "Die Wacht am Rhein," for example, is played throughout.[48] Based on a patriotic poem from the mid-nineteenth century that recounts the threat of invasion to territories near the Rhein,[49] the song had nationalistic and military connotations long before its association with the Nazi regime, much like the history of the "Deutschlandlied" (see Introduction, n. 15). Reviving these pieces of music helped perpetuate the fantasy of historical continuity, offering a phantasmatic rationale for Germans to be military and vigilant. Raben would continue to subject them to assault, even in lesser-known work like *Bismarck*, a 1990 telefilm loaded with nationalist and militaristic war-horses that resonated deeply with domestic audiences. Bombastic though they may be, Raben orchestrates them in such a way as to generate the impression of their being fatigued, worn-out. Eisler's advocacy of what he called the "clichéd" use of "standardized" music in films is relevant here: through overuse, pieces can be bereaved of their initial spellbinding properties. Finding a "certain charm" in Disney's "Pluto galloping over the ice to the ride of the Walkyries," Eisler cites an example that deprives Wagner's music of any claim to auratic uniqueness.[50]

Some of Eisler's other ideas also seem a good match for Raben's. Both advocate an antinaturalist use of music; both champion unexpected sound-image pairings by matching pitch relations to screams, sirens, and other noises; both value segmentation and interruption over continuity and development. Each of them prefers fragmentation to the rich, complicitous identifications of classical filmmaking practice. Both, in short, value shock over seduction. Examples proliferate throughout Raben's work, but a striking one occurs in his use of Mahler's Eighth Symphony at the beginning of *Chinese Roulette*.

The film opens with alternating shots of the mother and daughter. Carefully framed in separate rooms, the characters are inert and wordless (the mother simply mutters an ambiguous "schön" when she finally reaches her daughter). These are ice-cold tableaux, acoustically overwhelmed by the impassioned aria of a male vocalist with chorus from the Eighth Symphony. That voice, along with the odd reverie of mother and daughter, is abruptly silenced once the father opens the door and enters the house, as if walking into a woman's film. Yet the paternal term has not interrupted anything at all—this is not an enactment of the Lacanian *nom du père* halting imaginary bliss between child and mother. For the film goes on to detail one of the most hateful mother-daughter relationships imaginable.

Angela, the daughter, at the opening of Fassbinder's antimaternal melodrama, *Chinese Roulette*

Chinese Roulette thus appears to set the stage for a maternal melodrama but undercuts it in different ways. The text of Mahler's Eighth Symphony, for instance, is based on Goethe's *Faust*, probably the most famous narrative of a man making a pact with the devil (not by chance are Fassbinder's characters named Gabriel, Christ, and Angela). Second, the lush symphonic accompaniment of the soloist and children's choir of "angels" stand in sharp contrast to the staged *stillness* of the two female characters. In spite of the brevity of the quote (a couple of minutes), it thus illustrates Eisler's dictate that film music function as "movement as a contrast to rest."[51] The original music that Raben composed for the film produces the same effect with punning literalness. Using ballet, waltz, and other dance forms, it provides an ironic juxtaposition to the fact that Angela cannot even walk without crutches or braces.

Sound and music destabilize the ending of *Chinese Roulette* as well. As I described in the Introduction, we hear portions of a requiem mass, after an offscreen gunshot, out of sequence. We don't know who has been shot—the event presumably follows Traunitz's having been wounded—but we do know that Fassbinder believed *Chinese Roulette* gave his sharpest indictment of marriage. Musically, all is fraudulent; there is no redemption or even grief here. By resequencing and fragmenting the mass, Raben shows that music is not commensurate with the feelings typically associated with it. In other words, grief and mourning are not coterminous with traditional liturgical forms, nor do they proceed from them.

Ariane, the mother in *Chinese Roulette*

Here it is worth exploring other examples of the seemingly modernist violence of Raben's use and advocacy of "Musik-Shock." Whether Raben selected preexisting music or composed new material for Fassbinder's films, the connection of that music to the diegetic period is disjunctive, undercutting as much as establishing setting, as *Chinese Roulette* demonstrates. Describing his work for Fassbinder's war trilogy, Raben states: "With each one, my music referred to the appropriate period. In *Lili Marleen*, it relied heavily on Wagner and Bruckner, judged favourably by the Nazis. In *Lola*, it was music of the early 50s, influenced by Glenn Miller or Mantovani and therefore with a large orchestra in these styles. For *Veronika Voss*, you find an American influence of country music, barely sketched out, to be sure, but there to suggest the origin of the drug given to Veronika by her doctor."[52]

Violence prevails in the often-overwhelming silence of many of Raben's scores, especially for Fassbinder's early work. There were pragmatic reasons for this—at the beginning, Fassbinder and Raben were unable to afford rights to music they wanted to include—and historical explanations as well. In a 1998 interview, Raben reminded me of the Young German Cinema's early polemics against cinematic artifice and the aspersion it cast upon indulgences like nondiegetic music.[53] He noted the cleverness of Straub and Huillet, who preempted criticism by claiming their films were actually documentaries of "workers working"—the workers simply happened to be musicians. Economic factors dictated the shape of soundtracks:

rights were costly to obtain, original music was expensive to record, etc. As the international success of the movement grew (and as coproductions became more common), larger budgets became available for star directors like Fassbinder. It is therefore not incidental that middle and later productions like *Berlin Alexanderplatz* and *Chinese Roulette* have intricate, multisourced scores and that the soundtracks of Wim Wenders and Jürgen Kneiper, always known for their sophistication, similarly grew more layered as different world music increasingly informed the directors' work. (Indeed, Wenders's image as film *Autor* has grown virtually indistinguishable from that of colonial discoverer of foreign, regional musicians in films like *Lisbon Story* (1994) and his 1999 hit, *The Buena Vista Social Club.*)

Fassbinder's early films featured what might be called stylized dialogue that functioned as music.[54] The near-absence of music suggests the influence of prevailing aesthetic dictates of the time. Yet since we have seen how the almost restive absence of music overturns convention within Fassbinder's early melodramatic output, I hesitate to reduce these scores to so much trend-following. As Norbert Jürgen Schneider observes about Fassbinder's work more generally, silence frequently takes over, even having the last word in the soundtrack.[55] And silence can say a lot. "Silence is never a neutral emptiness," Michel Chion writes, "It is the negative of sound we've heard before or imagined; it is the product of contrast."[56] And silence can point to what *should* be there.

Peer Raben's dense score for *Berlin Alexanderplatz* reaches a pinnacle in the fourth chapter, in which Franz Biberkopf almost drinks himself to death. This chapter features the barest of narrative movement, and music interrupts what little diegetic action there is. It certainly takes over the linguistic and symbolic interactions eluding Biberkopf at this point (not for nothing is the section named "A Handful of People in the Depths of Silence"). As Biberkopf nearly suicides in a run-down room, we hear only ghostly sounds and voices that reprise earlier dialogue or sing parts from a requiem or sections of Mahler's ubiquitous Eighth Symphony.

The score parallels Biberkopf's passivity as he undergoes one of his several redemptions and rebirths throughout the film. At the same time, the sounds of this chapter partake of a quietly insistent delirium, with female voices coming and going, producing eerie, ethereal "ohhhs" and "ahhhhs."[57] As for Mahler's Symphony, it is important to recall that the piece not only deals with a pact with the devil—a pact Franz will seal on several occasions—but that it incorporates themes of redemption (*Läuterung*) crucial to *Berlin Alexanderplatz.* In the film's famous epilogue, Franz undergoes another hallucinatory experience, a "dream" in which all of the previous characters appear, with their accumulated, entangled motifs. Interwoven

among them are a variety of existing musical pieces Fassbinder considered religious (apparently Raben had to convince the director that Kraftwerk's "Radio Activität" was not religious music). As in the alcoholic fourth chapter, the epilogue features a dizzying variety of musical styles and themes, sounds, noises, and snippets of previous dialogue that accompany the character as he undergoes another death and rebirth—hence the appropriateness of a religious form like the requiem mass.

Christian Thomsen once observed that the characters of *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, who are themselves split, exist inside one another.[58] The idea is reinforced musically in the phantasmagoric final sequence and in the film as a whole. Norbert Jürgen Schneider discusses this in terms of the character-centeredness of Raben's score:

> [E]ach person has his/her theme, his/her leitmotif. Obviously, this method has been obsolete since Carl Maria von Weber. But in the totality of Fassbinder's style, it still works. It helps with the complex story, creating order and an overview [*übersicht*] upon first hearing it. [It is] grandiose when, for example, Mieze first appears with a piece of music [a familiar children's lullaby] that tells everyone immediately that this girl is innocent and pure. [As] Peer Raben [puts it]: "with the character the music also enters as his/her musical portrait."[59]

As Schneider notes, Raben's decision to use traditional thematic scoring and his use of character leitmotifs is unusual, even "obsolete." But as he also says, the sheer length and complexity of the story make it a reasonable decision. Because *Berlin Alexanderplatz* lasts over fourteen hours and first aired in installments on German television, Raben had to ensure that audiences would recall as much as possible of previous installments—events, characters, relationships. Clarity was critical, and Raben knew that leitmotifs offered a way to provide it in an otherwise dense, collagistic text. This is not to say that his thematic scoring was conventional, however. In the famous sequence in which Reinhold murders Mieze, Biberkopf's lover, in the woods, Schneider identifies Biberkopf's motif, thereby holding Biberkopf at least partially responsible for her death, even though only Mieze and Reinhold are present. (Given what has transpired in the plot, this is not an unreasonable reading; flashbacks that repeatedly show Biberkopf killing Lina make clear his murderous potential.) Yet, as Raben himself noted, *all* of the film's major characters are musically "present" in the woods, just as every character plays a part in Reinhold's violence against Mieze: Meck arranged the deadly rendezvous; Eva had prevailed upon Franz for Mieze to remain a prostitute; landlady Frau Bast interfered with her eavesdropping and gossip.

Returning to Christian Thomsen's observation that *Berlin*'s characters reside "inside one another," let us consider their actual musical motives. Franz Biberkopf is represented by the most frequently heard theme, dominating the soundtrack as much as he dominates the story and mise-en-scène (few scenes do not include him). But Franz has a second theme too, one introduced just over an hour into the first installment, "The Punishment Begins." Played by a flute, we first hear it when he and Lina are in bed where he pledges, with her as his "witness," to "take an oath" to "stay honest" and "conform to society." This secondary oath motif is repeated frequently throughout the rest of the film. That two themes are tied to Biberkopf reveals how even a *single* character gets "placed inside another," with an acoustically split identity, as many have argued about the themes and visuals of Fassbinder's work thematically and visually. Both of Biberkopf's themes are characterized by a steplike motion followed by a leap. (The principal theme features a major second step upwards and then back down, followed by a minor seventh leap upwards; his second, oath theme has a minor second step downwards and then back up, followed by a minor sixth upwards.)

The motifs of other characters are structurally related as well—indeed, they are entwined with Franz's. Meck's and Reinhold's are both modifications of Biberkopf's, asserting not only their erotic, criminal, and social interconnectedness, but the structuring centrality of Biberkopf to the film as a whole. Meck's theme begins with the leap of a minor sixth followed by steplike descents ending in a minor second that go down and then back up in a sort of inversion of Franz's main theme. Reinhold's resembles Franz's even more closely, a fact that underscores the importance of their relationship to the narrative as well as the "inside-one-another-ness" of their identities and desires. It begins with a major second, moving upwards and then back down, followed by a minor third leap upwards, followed by a leap upwards of a perfect fifth. It is like Franz's theme but compressed, the first four notes showing the same motion as Franz's. Other characters are likewise represented as musical variations of Biberkopf: Eva's theme, a sort of waltz, begins with a leap downwards of a major sixth, which is repeated and then followed by a neighboring motion, down then back up, of a second. A major second neighboring motion (upward then back down) musically depicts Mieze, followed by a downward leap of a minor fifth. Meize is also accompanied by a constant stream of lullabies and children's songs to the point of campiness, as when she is first introduced, bathed in very diffuse light, wearing a girlish white dress and hair ribbon. Franz's acoustic domination of the film does not, however, convey a sense of control or power, but rather shows the extent to which fragmentation and splintering shape his body, his subjectivity, and the film more generally.

How does Raben's decision to deploy motivic composition in *Berlin* convey a modernist sensibility? In one sense, it follows the aims of neoclassicists of the 1920s insofar as it revisits earlier, traditional compositional styles and techniques, like thematic scoring, to modify them. It doesn't overlook musical predecessors, Nazified or not, preferring instead to rework them. Raben also does this in his score for Werner Schroeter's *Tag der Idioten* / *Day of the Idiots* (1981), a film that could be called a latter-day example of the *Zeitoper* advocated by musical modernists in the 1920s. (The film takes place in a contemporary psychiatric institution, and we follow protagonist Carole Bouquet's arrival and departure there.) Additionally, Hanns Eisler's remark that "well-arranged *noise strips* might in many cases be preferable to music"[60] aptly describes the amplified typewriters that interrupt *Maria Braun* periodically. This sound, which critics have understandably mislabeled as that of jackhammers or machine guns, draws equivalencies between war's destructive machinery and that of the postwar capitalist "miracle." For Roger Hillman, for instance, it functions as a motivic theme set in motion by the bombs and sirens of the film's opening, which is framed by the radio transmission of the 1954 German World Cup victory over Hungary blared at the end: "That's it! That's it! The game is over! Germany is world champion! *[Deutschland ist Weltmeister!]*," cries sportscaster Herbert Zimmerman.[61] *Maria Braun* trumps up its acoustic explosion of private and public domains with markers of German pride and aggression, moving seamlessly from Beethoven to postwar soccer. Political reference points are made through a number of striking visual details: Hitler's portrait fills and then tumbles out of the film's opening frames; at the end of the film we see negatives of a series of portraits of Germany's postwar chancellors—all except for the less conservative Willy Brandt. Here it is worth recalling the "interpenetration" of public military announcements into ostensibly private spaces in Sanders-Brahms's/Knieper's *Germany, Pale Mother.* What distinguishes Kneiper's and Raben's treatment of "noise strips" from Eisler's, however, is that Eisler—who preferred the recording of a storm over the musical suggestion of one—revels in the creative potential of technology, whereas Raben and Knieper foreground its destructiveness.[62]

And so the productive shocks and physical violence so cherished by musical modernists before and between the World Wars are turned *inward* in postwar film. Raben takes conventional form and technique to undo them from the inside out. Recordings are smashed or badly performed, pieces altered or damaged, as he wages violence against Europe's canonic repertoire. Examples range from his dizzying variations on Vivaldi's Violin Concerto in A Minor that constitute part of the *Lola* "Concerto" to the barely audible, scratchy recording of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at the beginning

of *Maria Braun*. Regarding the latter, it is worth noting how critics have associated violence with Beethoven's famous symphony, formally (see McClary),[63] historically (Beethoven's work was the first that the Nazis officially placed off limits for Jewish performers), or both (the still-fetishized "Ludwig van" that accompanies Alex's violent sprees in Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* [1971]). Brecht, who disliked Beethoven, quipped that "his music always reminds one of paintings of battles."[64]

Raben is the first to acknowledge the direct relationship music can have to physical or political violence. In *Lili Marleen*, Nazi officials actually torture Willie's Jewish lover by repeatedly playing a scratched, skipping recording of "Lili Marleen," the song incessantly performed by and equated with his Aryan girlfriend. The beginning of *Martha*, in which Martha's sadistic lover pursues her after her father's death, recalls the opening act of *Don Giovanni*. Martha, moreover, adores Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, an operatic tale of forced marriage that also comments—painfully—on her own circumstances. But Martha's husband forbids her to play it, and she soon finds the record, like her adopted cat, destroyed (curiously, the piece is a favorite of the equally unhappily married Emma Bovary). As I argued in Chapter One, the record-smashing scene in *Merchant of Four Seasons* is even more violent since Hans, who has identified with "Buona Notte Bambino," breaks it himself, acoustically rehearsing the suicide he will soon perform at the drinking table. Alexander Kluge, as we shall see in the next section, also recognizes music's role in larger cultural/emotional/physical violence. His distrust of nineteenth-century tragic opera is strong, and in identifying the opera house as a bombastic "power plant of emotions," he criticizes its institutionalization of music and the human feelings it feeds upon. Like Benjamin before him, Kluge prefers smaller stories and feelings, ones that get left behind—not unlike the debris produced by war, political censure, or indifference. It is instructive to compare his approach to decay and ruins to that of Eisler, who instead urged composers "to *check* the decay of music . . . to find a new technique, a new style and thus a new circle of listeners."[65] Kluge and Fassbinder/Raben (as well as the queer, camp filmmakers after them), by contrast, considered these fragments of decay and negativity crucial precisely to allow new "circles of listeners" to emerge.

POSTMODERN DEPARTURES: RATIONALISM, VIOLENCE, AND BODIES

Thus, despite the references to modernist concepts such as shock and violence, and despite the similarities to earlier composers such as Eisler (a

canonical figure to any German film composer), Raben and his colleagues leave the impression that these references provided cultural practices to be reworked rather than retrieved. Whereas Eisler wrote that "motion-picture music should not become the tool of pseudo-individualization,"[66] Raben, by contrast, loads his score for *Lola* full of what he calls "bad popular songs" of the 1950s, such as "Capri Fischer" and "Am Tag, als der Regen Kam" (Becaud/Delanoe), precisely *to* accentuate the "pseudo-individuality" of the film's characters, the corrupt managers and beneficiaries of postwar Germany's economic miracle.

More telling than this contrast of Eisler and Raben, however, is Raben's own account of the New German Cinema's beginnings. He wrote that German film composers at the time "had no rules, examples, models."[67] They couldn't turn to Hollywood. The symphonic orchestras that Hollywood studio composers like Max Steiner enjoyed had never been a routine feature in German film production, and few individuals enjoyed the kind of profiles that Steiner, Korngold, Waxman, and others had in the States. Though a pragmatic observation, especially given the differences in industrial and funding structures of German and U.S. filmmaking, Raben's comment also stands as an Oedipal, aesthetic, and ideological rejection of German musical forebears *like* Eisler. While generally subscribing to Eisler's basic position that film music needn't match the image or the historical/geographical setting of the film's diegesis, Raben found his notion of music-image "opposition" too "flat, too heavy-handed." Like Fassbinder's well-known criticism of Brecht for the latter's purported disregard of emotional response and identification,[68] Raben finds Eisler's aesthetics of contradiction "too active, rational, and unfeeling."[69] Raben's work bears this out because, for all its shocks, it is compellingly beautiful music.

Eisler once wrote that music was "*par excellence* the medium in which irrationality can be practiced rationally."[70] Sounding much like Kracauer on the mass ornament, he wrote, "Today, indolence is not so much overcome as it is managed and enhanced scientifically. Such a rationally planned irrationality is the very essence of the amusement industry in all its branches. Music perfectly fits the pattern."[71] Interestingly, this critique, made in *Composing for the Films*, is contradicted by the text's repeated call for an "objective" use of film music. Thus, in spite of Eisler's steadfast critique of music's rationalization, commodification, and overall function under capitalism, one nonetheless detects a certain faith—one marked by the modernist heritage from which he emerged—in a similar form of rationalization.

I don't want to use Eisler too metonymically here, to have him signal every attitude of every cultural modernist in Germany during the 1920s. Nor do I

wish to minimize the ideological differences among these figures, coming as they did from left and right extremes of the political spectrum—or from purportedly apolitical centrist positions—and expressing mixed enthusiasm for things modern. Eisler's endorsement of *Gebrauchsmusik*,[72] for example, was highly qualified, even ambivalent, although, like most of its leaders, he consistently argued against the capitalist division that "has led to a peculiar division between specialist and amateur in art. That indicates the difficulty of talking scientifically about music. If we want to discuss art in such a way that we not only describe it, but also obtain practical and useful results then it is essential to introduce scientific methods, not only into the production of art, but also into the conception of art."[73] Yet it is precisely this faith, however qualified, in technology, science, and rationalism (shared to varying degrees by Brecht and Eisenstein and rejected by surrealists and dadaists)[74] that gets twisted into unrecognizable shape by Raben/Fassbinder, Knieper/Sanders-Brahms, Kluge, and other members of the New German Cinema.

For someone eager to "check the decay" of musical trends, it is more than a little curious that Eisler selects the metaphor of disease to make the point. Arguing that diseases were once perceived as "matters of chance," misfortune, or demonic possession, he writes that science now acknowledges their basis in germs and since diseases are often a consequence of poor economic conditions, the latter are therefore also "changeable, curable"—not fated. "If we modern composers," he goes on to say, "were able to apply some of this objectivity, common sense and knowledge to our own field, we would be more successful."[75] Eisler's desire for healthy social, somatic, and musical conditions is very different from Santner's concept of homeopathic healing, in which decay, disease, and alterity are not projected outward, but taken in.

This is not to say that Eisler's confidence in science and technology was boundless. Many of his writings blast the failure of technology to widen music listenership or to advance proletarian music. He argues, for instance, that "the tempo and rhythm of [contemporary factory workers'] work is dictated by their machines and not by the workers themselves," as opposed to the "Song of the Volga Boatmen," which, he enthuses, moves with the rhythms of the men's labor.[76] Nevertheless, it is clear that Eisler's rhetorical turns to science, technology, and objective presentation are meant to preserve categories of the Expert and the Artist against which are juxtaposed the Amateurs and the Music Lovers, whom Eisler repeatedly laments are taking over. But contradictions punctuate his work. For example, although he rallied vigorously against Hollywood cinema, Eisler reserved a certain optimism about the cinema as a populist art form, and maintained this position even after the war. As he wrote in the late 1940s,

film's "sensationalism" and nonbourgeois progenitors like "dime novels" and fairgrounds enabled it "to gain access to collective energies that are inaccessible to sophisticated literature and painting." In the end, however, the kind of music he believes taps such vibrant collectivity is far from populist. "Traditional music," he goes on to say, cannot "reach" this perspective; "modern music," by contrast, "is suitable to it." For instance, the "traditional music" he felt Steiner composed for *King Kong* failed to achieve what the "shocks of modern music" could have.[77]

Given these differences, one might position Fassbinder and Raben as textbook illustrations of postmodernism's rejection of some of (German) modernism's indenture to reason, truth, science, and rationalization. For, contrary to their predecessors, they stressed the unexpectedness of audience response and sought playfulness over scientifically derived effects. For Raben and Fassbinder, shock was no longer a calculable or predictable effect, something objectively manufactured or democratically aimed. Instead, it was sporadic, subjective, and chaotic—if no less violent. This shift to what Raben calls the "unexpected" is, I believe, still constitutive of a utopian sensibility. And if the hopes that were raised seemed lower than those of the political modernists before them, that made the impulse behind them all the more crucial.

Other conceptual differences separate Raben and Eisler's enthusiasm for shock in film music. According to Eisler, early film music tried to "help the spectator absorb the shock" of seeing lifelike images lacking sound, a familiar enough remark for film music historians.[78] (Perhaps the idea is equally appropriate for a postwar cinematic movement enmeshed with its own ghosts.) Before the war, the idea of adapting to shock was critical. Benjamin famously claimed that cinema and other new technologies offered a training ground for the body to adapt to the shocks of modernity. Overall, however, modernist shock was not something that jolted, moved, or changed the body so much as something that was adopted or integrated into it, like so many homeopathic pills.

THERAPEUTIC SHOCKS AND PILLS, OR MODERNIST AND POSTMODERNIST DIVIDES

> Postmodernity is modernity without the hopes and dreams that made modernity bearable.
>
> —DICK HEBDIGE

As I argued in the previous chapter, Santner's homeopathic-derived model of dealing with the past offers an alternative to the concepts of *Vergangen-*

heitsbewältigung and *Trauerarbeit.* His study leaves us to ponder a number of questions: Who takes the homeopathic pills? What is the loss Germans mourn? How is this collective Germanness constituted? What relationships connect psychic and subjective mourning with socio-political, collective mourning? While Santner observes that successful mourning is contingent upon a socially supportive space in which "mourning play" may be conducted, somewhat less clear is how various groups obtain access to these public spaces. How does *Trauerarbeit* differ for Jews, for instance, for people of various sexualities, and for nationally, ethnically, and generationally differentiated groups, in an equally differentiated "Germany"?

Like Santner's *Stranded Objects,* Allen Weiss's study of the Swiss *art brut* movement, whose tortured, traumatized, disfigured bodies appear to convey the unsettled physicality of modern subjectivity, turns to medical treatment as an exegetic source. Weiss admires Francis Bacon, for instance, for having initiated "a realism of deformation, opposed to the idealism of transformation."[79] Such a materialized realism might be exemplified in Franz Biberkopf. *Berlin Alexanderplatz* likens Biberkopf to every beast imaginable, and in the last chapter, it actually depicts him strung up in an abattoir, and his subsequent "transformation" emerges only after his rebirth as a petit-bourgeois Nazi supporter at the film's conclusion. Weiss's study pushes another connection between bodies and shock when he mentions, "without further comment," the psychiatric "treatments" purportedly developed during the Nazi era, in Axis countries. Electroshock therapy, which "creat[es] violent convulsions of the body, was developed in Rome in 1938; insulin shock therapy, which puts the body in a comatose state, was developed in Vienna in 1933."[80]

I am less interested in Weiss's historical errors[81] than in his desire to equate abusive physical shocks with abusive political regimes. He infers an unmediated commensurability between bodies, technologies, and political epochs that is problematic on a number of levels. Can the shocks and jolts of modernity be captured or conveyed by contemporary cinematic form, or by later film movements like the New German Cinema? Can social/representational shocks be directly absorbed by spectators? Such correlations place perception, cinema, and body into impossibly neat, unified equivalences. Even Benjamin succumbs to the temptation when he writes that "the shock experience which the passer-by has in the crowd corresponds to what the worker 'experiences' at his machine."

Critics frequently assume that people must be fundamentally passive in order to receive these modernist shocks. In the same essay, Benjamin describes Poe's urban pedestrians: "Their behavior is a reaction to shocks. If jostled, they bow profusely to the jostlers."[82] Thus in spite of its con-

stantly asserted productivity by artists and intellectuals, modernist shock is simultaneously constituted as a threat of *too much production*, of excessive energy and stimulation—an out-of-control production that the hapless modernist subject has to confront and endure. (Not incidentally, those excesses are marked by racial, sexual, and gender differences, as Andreas Huyssen and Peter Wollen observe in their analyses of *Metropolis* [Lang, 1926], a film that clearly articulates an anxiety of technologically induced excess through white heterosexual women's bodies—much as Fassbinder would do in *Lili Marleen*.)[83]

By stressing the absorption of shock, previous modernist discourse had established imaginary bonds between the human body and external stimuli, be this the cinema or a vaguer notion of "the modern experience," in order to habituate the former to the latter, to train and regulate it at the same time that the body was believed to be inoculated against that very externality. Absorbing the shock meant absorbing the lesson. Althusserian structuralism could do no better. Neither could Eisenstein, whose "Montage of Attractions" essay, over thirty years before William Castle's *The Tingler* hit U.S. theatres in 1959, advocated rigging electrical currents in the seats of designated theatre chairs. Shock has always been grounded in physicality, from its first usage in agricultural measurement and military operations to its more contemporary usage (as with trauma, discussed in the following chapter). Critics retain the physical side of shock while asserting that it prompts new forms of knowledge or perception. The New German Cinema upheld this belief in knowledge's physicality with surprising insistence. Kluge offers an especially literal exemplification in *The Patriot*. Among many examples from the film is its narration by a talking knee which, we learn, is all that remains of a German soldier killed at Stalingrad, "remains" that stubbornly insist on their historical significance. But even though the New German Cinema was littered with splintered, seemingly modernist, "shell-shocked" bodies, the matter of absorption and of shock's forced integration *into* the body was constructed differently than in interwar modernism.

For shock retains the threat of what *can't* be absorbed, of what can only be repeated, recontextualized, or repulsed. Thus in contrast to the internalized shock treatments espoused by Benjamin, Eisler, and others, Kluge and Fassbinder/Raben stress shocks that the postwar body *cannot* absorb. This is evident in what the body cannot take, as with the death of Hans in *The Merchant of Four Seasons* or of Fox in *Fox and His Friends*, or Fassbinder's countless other depictions of drug or alcohol abuse—bodies that have literally absorbed too much. Mendelssohn's torture scene in *Lili Marleen*, in which the song plays repeatedly in his tiny cell, reveals a strategy of phys-

Tiny torture chambers in Fassbinder's *Lili Marleen*

ical overdose imposed by the Nazis. Fassbinder reprises the theme in *Veronika Voss,* when the evil doctor gives U.S.-supplied drugs to Veronika Voss, who at the end of the film is left to overdose in a small, locked room over Easter weekend.

Without a doubt, shock affects, transforms, and deforms bodies in Fassbinder's films, with the one-armed Franz Biberkopf remaining a particularly striking example. Yet nowhere is there a sense that these bodies are capable of absorbing the shock. No myth of buffering, protection, or internalization is in operation. In a sense, these postwar films suggest that bodies cannot refuse shock any more than they can take it. And if shocks like Raben's still offer enlightenment in unexpected places, it is nonetheless worth recalling the extent to which shock and trauma also create disempowered, victimized subjects.

Another example from *Lili Marleen* demonstrates that postwar shock, in contrast to modernist shock, depends on the body's alienation from the people and contexts to which it is juxtaposed. During Willie's first performance of the song with which she is associated, a brawl erupts in a small cabaret, whose male patrons make crass remarks about her voice. In her first sponsored performance for the Nazi party, Willie wears a colorful blue dress that exposes her throat and chest, and leaves her arms free to gesticulate and add other emphatic weight to the song. This freedom and energy diminish with each repetition of the endlessly performed song, and by the

. . . and in *Veronika Voss* before her overdose

final number, Willie, bound in a tight, metallic dress, seems less alive than mummified. The shimmery armor of her gown, in which she can barely move, suggests that a lifeless artifice has overtaken the affect of the tired, romantic song. Willie's connection to shock and death is rendered all the more explicit through Fassbinder's clever, disturbing intercutting of her performance with the song's "simultaneous" broadcast on the battlefield. Believing that the song emerges from a fellow German camp, the soldiers (led by Taschner, Willie's friend and former accompanist) forge on, only to be gunned down by Russian troops. The sequence offers a quite literal conflation of woman and music into a "bombshell" siren, a shock generated by an unwilling body that lures men to their deaths. Here one might say that the song achieves on a mass scale what it had attempted individually when Robert Mendelssohn was being tortured.

Just as these recent shocks deaden bodies, nothing guarantees that they will generate productive or desirable results. Given the fundamental alienation of the body from any unifying contexts, shock can be said to affect it but does not buffer or inoculate it from externality. Recent film-shocks thus work to operate on the principle of isolation and emptiness, not protection or assimilation. Such a conception contrasts dramatically with the synergistic assumptions of modernist textuality, where dialectical montage added up to more than the sum of its parts, yielding ideological, epistemological, and political gain. Such gains were crucial to many branches of

From giddy chanteuse to glitzy mummy: Hannah Schygulla's performances at the beginning of *Lili Marleen*. Courtesy of the Kobal Collection.

modernism that, like the socio-economic and technological aims of modernity itself, tended to value progress and productivity. In other words, New German cinematic absence and "the subtractive" govern what had once been a productivity constituted around additive assumptions (assemblage, montage, collage). Consider the deserted, cavernous spaces of Daniel Schmid's *Schatten des Engels* / *Shadow of Angels* (1975) and *Hors Saison* or the constant fades to white in Fassbinder adaptations like *Effi Briest* and *Querelle* (1982). As Alexander Kluge put it in a discussion of *The Patriot*, "The after image is what matters. Before it, something has been *emptied out*, and after it there is an image that does not belong. I call that the subversive work of the cinema."[84] And from Jean-Marie Straub, from a 1972 interview on the release of *Geschichtsunterricht* / *History Lessons:* "I think the deception comes about when one gives people the impression

. . . and at the end. Courtesy of Bayerischer Rundfunk/RGA.

that something always happens when the film is running, something they call 'action.' It's not true; when a film that doesn't rest on deception is running, nothing is happening, absolutely nothing. Whatever happens, only happens in the spectator."[85] The after-effects of modernity and the war, along with their "shocks," take form as blanks, afterimages, leftovers, and negation in the postwar German cinema.

In postwar "modernism," the formal mechanisms that once seemed to be the very guarantors of political effects become emptied debris. Compare the following passages from Adorno. The first is a 1928 review of

Weill/Brecht/Hauptmann's *The Three Penny Opera*, and the second is a postwar reflection on the transformative potential of modernist montage, published posthumously in 1970:

> How distant I at first feel from music that does not draw any consequences from the current state of musical material, but rather seeks its effects by transforming old, atrophied material: Weill achieves this effect with such force and originality that, faced with the fact, the objection pales. In Weill there is a regression, one which exposes the demonic traits of dead music and uses them. (1928)[86]

> The idea of montage and that of technological construction are intimately bound up with each other. Together they are becoming increasingly incompatible with the notion of radically elaborated art with which they used to be identical. The principle of montage was supposed to shock people into realizing just how dubious any organic unity was. Now that the shock has lost its punch . . . the interest in montage has therefore been neutralized; more and more, it becomes a historical and cultural concern. (1970)[87]

Modernism's novelty and oppositional edge, along with strategies like montage, diminished as they were brought into art history books, museums, and a variety of aesthetic canons. As Fredric Jameson argued in the influential anthology *Aesthetics and Politics*, the practices and analyses of political modernists no longer held sway. The "culture industry," he argued, had become so massified that it made "an unpropitious climate for any of the older, simpler forms of oppositional art [proposed by Lukács, Brecht, Benjamin, or Bloch]. The system has a power to co-opt and to defuse even the most potentially dangerous forms of political art by transforming them into cultural commodities (witness, if further proof be needed, the grisly example of the burgeoning Brecht-Industry itself!)."[88] Against this seemingly totalizing, self-reproducing machine, Jameson called for a "new realism" built out of the awareness that modernism's emphasis on fragmentation/opposition/estrangement itself needed to be estranged, and "corrected by a more totalizing way of viewing phenomena."[89] Although Kluge had also called for a new form of realism to counter the totalizing effects of aesthetics under capitalism, it was his, Fassbinder's, and Raben's *refusal* of totalities that enabled them to find goal-less, productive play in the debris of modernism—as well as in the weightier ruins of National Socialism and the Shoah.

In a recent essay, Patrice Petro argues that the banality and boredom evident in the photographer Brassai's images of Paris in the late 1920s and early 1930s are a fundamental feature of the "provocative," sexualized images of modernity in his work. Petro compares Brassai's work with a 1980s

Rolling Stone photographic spread of Madonna. Maintaining that boredom is the necessary complement to modernist notions of shock, Petro argues that Madonna's portraits are composed in a banal attempt to shock. In other words, Petro suggests that while modernity may have been more invested in the depiction of boredom, as in, for instance, Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936), postmodernity produces boredom as an *effect*.[90] The fatigue and waning highlighted in analyses like those outlined above call to mind Raben's early work for Fassbinder in films whose themes, acting, and visual styles were all organized around banality and bleakness. The same sense infiltrates their scores, whose hollowness has already been commented upon. Such strategies are in Petro's terminology a constituent part of "after/shock," the shadow side of modernity's "restless search for novelty," a result of the overstimulation, indifferentiation, commodification, banalization, and institutionalization of "the new" that, as she rightfully insists, define modernist and postmodernist cultures alike. To her analysis I would add that because the New German Cinema participated in both a postwar era of "modernist European filmmaking" and a postmodernist era more generally, additional weight should be placed on the temporal implications of the term "*post*modernism." Moreover, and as critics like Saul Friedlander, Dominick LaCapra, and Eric Santner have stressed, its *post-Holocaust* provenance imparts a critical interpretive edge as well. Emerging from a ravaged Europe, West German film was marked with a particular (massively delayed) "aftershock," which included changing notions of nation and nationhood, dealing with the United States as both physical occupier and cultural colonizer, and dealing with changing, expanding patterns of global capitalism.

Superficially, the negativity of Fassbinder's films seems linked to their overriding pessimism. But as I noted in the preceding chapter, scholars have aligned this negativity with a utopian impulse. Kaja Silverman's thesis on the masochistic ecstasy that emerges from repudiating phallic identity remains one of the most daring articulations of this utopia, but she is by no means alone in its assertion. Elsaesser's recent work on sexuality in Fassbinder makes similar gestures, and before them, Peter Ruppert had examined Fassbinder's negatively constructed utopias. Fassbinder himself helped set these kinds of claims into motion, remarking—not unlike Brecht and Sirk had—that the unhappiest film endings are the most utopian in drawing our attention to how they could and need to be changed. Peer Raben likewise has drawn focused, explicit links between utopia and shock via music, and even Eisler's cynicism about music, banality, and duping reveals a prescience regarding its utopian potential: "Of all the arts," Eisler writes, "music is the most distant from the world of prac-

tical things and so it is most prone to be used as a sort of narcotic. It is said to arouse the emotions, though how this happens was never quite clear. In any case it appears to be the abstract opposite of emptiness and monotony in everyday life. The greater the emptiness and monotony, the sweeter the music."[91]

Postwar critical theorists frequently seem nostalgic for unrealized promises of prewar, political modernism and its supporting technologies. This can be seen with Adorno and Eisler. Eisler: "How poor we musicians have become, if we look back at [the] prehistory of music. . . . What power music had. Just think of the trumpets of Jericho, of Orpheus, of Odysseus and the Sirens."[92] Now, while Kluge and several other members of the New German Cinema have been accused of the "leftwing melancholy" Benjamin once described, one would be hard-pressed to identify this as *nostalgic* melancholy. Films like *Der Angriff der Gegenwart auf die übrige Zeit* / *The Blind Director* (1985), Kluge's last major film before moving into television and new media on what appears to be a permanent basis, are best described as heavily ironic, bittersweet adieux.

In an influential essay, Thomas Elsaesser once argued that with Fassbinder, "Identity . . . appears negatively, as nostalgia, deprivation, lack of motivation, loss,"[93] an idea fully worked out in *Mother Küster's Trip to Heaven*, Fassbinder's 1975 remake of Jutzi's 1929 film. Characters include Father Küster, the suicided husband/father who is never depicted and is constructed solely through the *responses* of the other role-playing characters. Mother Küster is the suffering wife who desperately tries to clear her husband's name, clinging to what's left of her family, and whose position within that family diminishes as each of her children leaves. Corinne, the daughter, uses the scandal to advance her stage career. Helena, the daughter-in-law—for whom her unborn baby "is everything"—is humiliated by it. The event gives fodder to a sensationalizing press, a martyr to the Communists, and an excuse for terrorism to the Anarchists. Only Ernst, the son, has no reaction and seems bereft of any commitment, ambition, or identity. His figure barely moves and is shown outside of his mother's house only once. But his non-acts are acts, and he seems to embody Elsaesser's observation that in Fassbinder, "victimhood" is presented as "a solution" in which exploitation exists without the support of the standard cultural fictions. Portrayed by the director's lover, Armin Meier, Ernst Küster is likely a stand-in for Fassbinder.[94]

By contrast, the son in Jutzi's original film performs a more active function. Guilt-ridden and remorseful for having taken money from his impoverished mother, he is depicted outdoors, lurking in dark alleyways, carrying out bungled robberies, and so on—an active outcast from the home

rather than its anchor of negation, like Ernst.[95] Discussing the remake, Fassbinder said he refused to "tell the audience what to do," unlike Jutzi's earlier film or other politicized cinema of the time, like *Kuhle Wampe*. The "shock" of Fassbinder's film thus does not emerge from productivity generated by the new, but from its refusal, from a repudiation of responses to others. Echoing the well-known conclusion of Kracauer's essay "Boredom," in which boredom was said to lead to an "unearthly bliss," Fassbinder seems to be suggesting that hope resides in actions not taken (like Ernst's), just as Peer Raben spoke of "hearing what is not yet true."

These differentiated shocks can partially—and I stress partially—be explained by the divide between modernism and postmodernism as aesthetic "dominants" (Jameson) connected to different socio-historic, economic, and psychological contexts. Fassbinder pushes the idea of modernist shocks as a defense against productivity to its limits, and questions their goal-oriented nature. Intellectuals of all stripes have argued that the Nazi deployment of modernism's rationalism, technology, and mass media helped "produce" the murder of people by the millions, bringing modernity's faith in the progressive capacity of new technologies to a definitive end. This is to suggest not that people no longer view new technologies as liberatory or potentially democratizing (one need only consider the high hopes for cyberspace), but rather that novelty and shock, whether tied to technology or to technique, are harder to connect to epistemological, social, moral, or political benefits. The myth of that guarantee is gone, and art's relationship to political agendas has changed. In addition to his oft-cited remark on the impossibility of poetry after Auschwitz, Adorno also maintained that after the war, "committed" political art was impossible, particularly in West Germany. Ironically, that critical function, Adorno argued, had been relocated to fundamentally "autonomous" art, a historical development he argued began with Beethoven's later work.[96]

Although Adorno was keenly aware that aesthetic autonomy was as contingent on capitalism as it was potentially critical of it, it is significant that he, like Fassbinder, evacuated the category of "the" political (whereas he goes on to relocate it, Fassbinder more or less sends it packing). Fassbinder's retreat from political categories is quite explicit in his writings. We also detect it in his harsh portrayal of the Communist couple in *Mother Kusters* and the strikingly unsympathetic depiction of leftwing terrorists in the same film. For a long time, academic commentators have endorsed Fassbinder's critical yet politically unfixed position(s) and his refusal to affiliate himself with organized groups and parties—his depiction of gay culture in *Fox and His Friends* is a good example—but that does not discount the outrage his work provoked among some of these very groups in Ger-

many. Curiously, comments on Fassbinder's antipathy to the left have enjoyed a resurgence since the *Wende* and the so-called demise of Communism,[97] after which even the left seems to be happily going about pronouncing its own demise.[98] Just as "politicized" readings of melodrama dropped off by the late 1980s, subsequent Fassbinder criticism appears to be absorbing the (non)positioning of its object of study in politically troubling ways, gently ridiculing all leftist positions *tout court* or eschewing words like "Marxism" or "socialism" in favor of vague, capacious labels like "the anti-capitalist left."[99] One prominent scholar writing in 1996 simply refers to the controversial 1977 death of terrorist Ulrike Meinhof in the high-security Stammheim prison as a "suicide."[100]

Problems of political categories aside, the discourse of refusal and negation goes at least as far back as nineteenth-century modernity and Nietzsche. They remain important tropes for postmodernism, although the terms are less aligned with fully oppositional stances or pure resistance so much as they are colored by a sense of dispersal or emptying out. That shocks still remain—especially in historically sensitive films like *Maria Braun* and *The Patriot*—indicates the considerable power of even their modified function for cinema viewers/listeners. On the one hand, shocks still testify to Benjamin's claim that a traditional "linear, progress- and victor-based continuous course of history" can be "blasted open," suggesting some continuity with the functions assigned to "shock" under modernism. On the other hand, aspects of contemporary shock move pointedly away from these earlier models and metaphors of violence.

If the negation and unpredictability associated with postwar shock no longer work toward antagonistic opposition or a full 180-degree "counterpoint" (as Eisler's mantra for film music puts it), it might be said that instead it yields *contradictions* and dislocations, which auditors may or may not take up. One dimension of these dislocations is elaborated by Chion's term "anempathetic" in his energetic rejection of terms like "counterpoint," "overturn," and "opposition" in film music studies. Chion is responding to the fact that when music doesn't replicate visual or narrative information, people tend to follow Eisler's lead and perfunctorily link it to ironic antiemotionalism or critique. Instead, Chion stresses that music provides a "backdrop of 'indifference' . . . [that] has the effect not of freezing emotion but rather of intensifying it." (That acoustic apathy is precisely what empowers Raben's near-absent score for *Merchant of Four Seasons*.) He goes on to describe the "cosmic indifference" that film music inherits from opera, "when emotional pitch was so high that it froze characters into inaction, provoking a sort of psychotic regression." Film music's deliberately banalizing indifference is, for Chion, "intimately related to cinema's

essence—its mechanical nature. For, indeed, all films proceed in the form of an indifferent and automatic unwinding, that of the projection. . . . What does anempathetic music do, if not to unveil this reality of cinema, its robotic face?"[101]

Chion's remark may seem more at home within Weimar debates on forms of *Gebrauchsmusik* and technologies of mass production than in early 1990s film theory, when it was written. Yet if we push what Chion calls cinema's "unveiling" beyond its mechanical "essence," we see how the New German Cinema provided an alternative space for auditors. Claudia Gorbman perfectly translates Chion's provocative reference to music *en creux* ("in the gap," in between spaces) as false or "phantom" sound—a sound that has no textual existence but is perceptually believed to exist. In other words, it is an absence, an alterity, that is wished present.[102] (Eisler once wrote à propos of his score for Lang's *Hangmen Also Die* that the music "acts as the representative of the collectivity [of the Czech underground]: not the repressive collectivity drunk with its own power, but the oppressed invisible one, *which does not figure in the scene.*")[103] Surely that psychological presence in the face of physical absence and the desire to hear what Raben calls the "not yet true" are part of a utopian hope for change.

Negativity offers one space in which such change can occur. Though a descendent of modernist shock that acknowledges the violence of (post-) mechanization and its socio-political institutions, it does not attempt to reproduce, internalize, or fuse with social conditions around it. Contemporary negation will not generate remarks like the best film music "runs like a sewing machine" or is commensurate to a gunning machine, or that it functions in pure opposition to either of them. Something else shapes this new, less violent form of shock. Beauty, as I mentioned in reference to Kurt Weill, joins the acoustic landscape. For Raben, "I frequently made use of these [particular kinds of] shocks; it's no contradiction to say that my music doesn't sound 'shocking,' but indeed sounds 'pretty.' "[104] Raben's focus on beauty and pleasantness would certainly frustrate strict modernist proponents of shock, who would have it achieved solely through dissonance, aesthetic "difficulty," and aloofness—assumptions that nourished a discourse of antipleasure for decades.

Raben and Weill's interest in beauty is not as a fixed aesthetic property or function. Rather, it openly admits the political and personal power of style, especially when conspicuous enough to be described in terms of materiality, theatricality, posture, or pleasure—terms often discredited by being associated with triviality or kitsch (recall Broch's remark that kitsch strives to "do something beautifully, not well"). Unpredictable moments of

aesthetic rapture may even offer beauty and pleasure as ways to attach ourselves psychically, politically, and socially to a variety of ideas and histories. Far from providing object-directed forms of identification or cathexis, they offer an impetus to engage, even if only taking form in the what-hasn't-happened. As Raben states, "Yes, beauty belongs to the Utopian."[105] All of this is not to say that beauty soothes or evades unpleasantness. For psychoanalytic critics, it is just the opposite. For Lacan, beauty is "a barrier so extreme as to forbid access to a fundamental horror"; Julia Kristeva simply calls it "depression's other realm."[106] In an overview of Fassbinder's work, Georgina Brown recognizes its constant "tension between beauty and cruelty," and only somewhat more optimistically does the lead character of Schroeter's *Malina* (1991) say, "I've never been happy, but I have seen beauty."[107]

Thus beauty is a component of Raben's Musik-Shock. Music need not be unsettling to jolt or to convey social critique. Interestingly, the illustration he used for me in our discussions was from Weill. Spontaneously, Raben sang the refrain of "Matrosen Song / The Sailors' Tango" from *Happy End:*

> Ah, the sea is blue, so blue
> And all the world goes on its way
> And when the day is over
> We start another day
> Ah the sea is blue, so blue.[108]

In Weill, Raben finds music strikingly "close to beauty," and about this example said, "Why should it sound dissonant, when one *knows* that the sea is blue? When something is as beautiful as that, why can't one just leave it and let the irony emerge automatically?" In the song's text, a storm washes over, sinking the ship on its way to the idealized Rangoon ("But of course / One can't let it upset one!").

Thus, under the surface of Raben's seemingly violent advocacy of shock in film music ("riots in your head"), there is a gentle, impassioned hope for change. Unlike his modernist predecessors, he seems less certain of film music's ability to actualize this change (for instance, by retraining the perceptual habits of filmgoers), relying instead on aleatory, random gaps, negation, or ephemeral moments of beauty. We can assess his work by way of a comment James Young made in the late 1990s regarding postwar memorials and "anti-monuments": "Unlike the utopian, revolutionary forms with which the modernists hoped to redeem art and literature after World War I, much post-Holocaust literature and art is pointedly anti-redemptory. The post-Holocaust memory artist, in particular, would say that not only is art not the answer, but after the Holocaust there can be no more

'final solutions.' "[109] What I want to propose is that Fassbinder's obsession with redemption emerges from its very impossibility. Although he and Raben retreat from modernism's belief in oppositional shocks, it is important to acknowledge how modernism's *own* ruins, music, and after-images would still function as "aftershocks" to reconfigure.

By critically reenergizing ideas and practices of prewar modernism, Raben and Fassbinder's soundtracks rework Germany's cultural and historical movements. Although Raben goes back to modernist musical traditions for important theoretical and compositional ideas, it is important to remember that he did not skip over the Nazi era, but instead used popular songs of the period, orchestrating music "à la Bruckner" in *Lili Marleen*. His practice may prove a key exception to LaCapra's assertion that the Shoah is a "repressed" of critical thought that formulates a "divider or traumatic point of rupture between modernism and postmodernism."[110] Clearly the brutalizing shocks from the Shoah and its aftermath have shaped the "post"-modernist deployment of Musik-Shock in the New German Cinema. But they may also explain why these filmmakers and composers still articulate, in their varied and displaced ways, what seems like an old-fashioned call for change.

PART II

Music and the Materials of History

Alexander Kluge

3 Kluge's Assault on History

Trauma, Testimony, and Difference in The Patriot

> The task of the materialist historian is to blast a specific era out of the homogeneous course of history.
>
> —WALTER BENJAMIN

> I don't believe in dialectics as a mode of abstract thought. I believe in a dialectic we can feel with our fingertips.
>
> —ALEXANDER KLUGE

INTRODUCTION

Benjamin's desire for explosive historiography describes the project of many New German Cinema directors. It operated in the different appearances of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony discussed in the Introduction. Literal "blasts" occur in a wide array of other films—not surprising for a movement concerned with World War II and its aftermath. Even those not set on the battlefield dramatize the explosive efforts needed to force Germany to come to terms with the past: *Germany, Pale Mother, Lili Marleen,* and *Maria Braun* all have explosions that connect their female protagonists to war and, in the case of Maria Braun, to memory and forgetfulness. As Benjamin makes clear, these blasts function as attacks on the materials of history itself: its myths, its omissions, its tools, its institutional supports, and the many pieces that go missing.

Benjamin's program is well suited to almost all of the socially and politically motivated directors of the movement, but his ideas reverberate with special force in the work of Alexander Kluge. At a formal level alone, the director's strategies can be called explosive: the collage-like structures of films like *The Patriot* and *The Power of Emotion* tear apart diegetic settings and narrative structures, interrupting them with intertitles, oral disposition, extradiegetic inserts, and with a provocative porousness between documentary and fiction. Kluge's cinema—as well as his creative and theoretical writings—offers a veritable glut of visual and acoustic *objets trouvés,* citations of the known and unknown, artifacts of high and less-than-high

culture. And his blasting takes direct political and intellectual aim at history and historiography.

In keeping with Kluge's punning rendition of materialist dialectics, there is a pressing, insistent physicality to the pieces that constitute his collage-like works both thematically and formally. They take form in the stereoscopic views, tinted film footage, and discussions of obsolete scrap metal in *The Blind Director,* the knee and the bush that witness battles from the eastern front in World War II, the elephants in *Artists Under the Big Top,* whose memory of a deadly circus fire is as weighty as the imprisoned beasts themselves. With *The Patriot*—and the questions it poses about history, survival, and bodies—its material objects function as witnesses of the past, texts upon which personal and public stories are marked. In that regard, they serve as physical reminders of the endurability of that past, literalizing its ongoing presence. Kluge's obsession with blasting open seemingly sealed, impermeable narratives and histories (and constructing new stories from their remains) continues in *The Power of Emotion.* Here, bodies are actants operating in larger economies of emotion and commerce such as opera and prostitution. The film's sustained focus on opera brings music into the spotlight more than *The Patriot* did (in a way, *The Patriot* is a prelude to *The Power of Emotion,* providing tools with which the latter film may itself be "blasted open").

Both films devote considerable energy to human bodies and how histories are inscribed on them or brought into being through them. Given Kluge's interest in materialism and materiality, that emphasis is hardly surprising. Yet both his theoretical work and his film work construct human bodies problematically, particularly when national, ethnic, and, especially, gendered features are involved.

The Patriot and *The Power of Emotion* examine the question of history through speaking and singing bodies, respectively. Of special concern to *The Patriot* is the speech of survivors, those who experienced trauma, and to an extent, the film proposes traumatic representation as its strategy of stylized remembrance. Just as we traced Peer Raben's interest in modernist shock back to interwar modernism, Kluge's focus on trauma draws our attention to shock's aftereffects, situating his concerns within *post*war scenarios. That movement away from shock is evidenced in his emphasis on bodies that endure different forms of trauma, a focus that raises the question of survival, which in turn is intimately tied to knowledge, power, and privilege. *The Patriot* seems to construct new forms of remembrance through speaking witnesses and the wounds of traumatized bodies, suggestive of the oral histories used to recount the Shoah. Yet its critics have

rightly observed that it fails to confront that challenge fully. Nevertheless, I believe that the film gives us the tools and structures to begin to do that.

TEACHERS, CRITICS, AND CORPORALS: HISTORY IN A BLENDER

Hessian high school history teacher Gabi Teichert is one of Kluge's most endearing characters. She graces the cover of Rainer Lewandoski's *Die Filme von Alexander Kluge,* and Anton Kaes devotes a chapter to her in *From Hitler to Heimat.* "Gabi," as she is usually called, makes her first cameo in *Germany in Autumn* as an archaeologist trying to extract secrets from German soil. The next year, she struggles "to present history in a patriotic fashion" in her own feature. In *The Patriot,* Gabi Teichert is the historical materialist incarnate, armed with a pickaxe and torchlight, battling wintry ice and storms to get at "better materials" of German history. In her underground study, the teacher takes saws, drills, and mallets to books, literally attacking *les grands récits* she deems inadequate to the task of a "patriotic representation of history." (Books are, after all, history's "byproducts," as she tells a bewildered party member at an actual Social Democrat convention.) Gabi's zeal to get at this history ends up distracting and tiring her: she is less able to function at school and grows increasingly detached. Over the course of the film, her experiences are constantly interrupted by various nondiegetic story fragments, old drawings, photographs, and manipulated film footage; one of the few unifying tropes of the film is Kluge's voice-over. *The Patriot* ends on a quasi-upbeat note on New Year's Day, with Gabi optimistically (naively?) facing the upcoming year. After this, the film fades to video blue.

Clearly Gabi's quest responds to Benjamin's call for history-making as a form of critical archaeology. But she does more than that. Gabi joins any number of female characters in the New German Cinema intent on piecing together histories from leftover pieces of the past: modern *Trümmerfrauen,* the women who sifted through rubble of the war for useful building materials. To be sure, actual *Trümmerfrauen* conducted their work with little interest in correcting history, but rather out of sheer survival. Their iconographic role as figures rebuilding "Germany" was potent enough for an entire genre of films to emerge around them in the late 1940s and, a full generation later, the New German Cinema would reference both the *Trümmerfrauen* and the *Trümmerfilm* in *Germany, Pale Mother, Maria Braun, The Patriot,* and other films. Real *Trümmerfrauen* joined fictional female

figures to allegorize the recovering, resourceful German nation-body, most exemplarily in Fassbinder's West German trilogy—as well as for characters like Gabi Teichert, intent on rebuilding German history. Curiously, the movement tended to use female bodies to symbolize the reproduction of nation, whereas male bodies would reflect its splintering and undoing.[1]

Post-1968 German cinema features as many excavations as it does explosions. Perhaps most famous is Sonja in Michael Verhoeven's *Das Schreckliche Mädchen* / *The Nasty Girl* (1990), who digs into the local archives for a school essay, "My Hometown During the Third Reich," and exposes her town's complicity with the Nazis (like most of Verhoeven's work, *The Nasty Girl* is based on actual events). The guarded vaults of Sonja's town library and records are clear references to institutionally suppressed stories and spaces. Gabi Teichert tries to "dig up" materials of Germany's past, turning to what lies literally buried in German soil (in doing this she turns the Nazi worship of "blood and soil" on its head). If in the end Verhoeven's Sonja uncovers more useable material than Gabi does, each is still ostracized by her community for having made the effort.

In a more masculine vein, Benjamin likened his work to that of an "engineer" who "builds" as he "blasts."[2] Kluge similarly referred to his films as "construction sites,"[3] no different from the work of those who build railroads and bridges or who found cities, except, as he said, that he does not use straight lines. Lines create order, tradition, and direction, paving the way for cause and effect, linear logic, and teleologically driven stories/histories / constructions. Not surprisingly, organizing centers are hard to find in Kluge's work, and he repeatedly asserts that his films are incomplete and must be filled in or "constructed" by readers/critics/viewers. Narrative scraps and stories disperse, repeat, and interweave among themselves. This was so much the case with *The Power of Emotion* that reviewers in Germany complained they could not locate a "story" at all, to which Kluge replied that, on the contrary, there were twenty-six—deploying the ironic statistics that run through his work.

Gabi pursues Kluge's interest in the "ruins that have become treasures" most obviously in terms of what Germany has buried in its violent past and its equally violent attempts to keep it covered—the historical issue so many Young German and New German Cinema directors confronted. But Kluge's emphasis on excavation, on bringing ruins to light, means not only recovering repressed materials, but scrutinizing them in a new light and transforming trash into tools. Like Benjamin, he shuns large, institutionalized artifacts in favor of banal objects like abandoned buildings, small city streets, toys, fairy tales, wishes, worn-out images, and old pieces of music.

These, he felt, were the tools out of which counter-histories could be produced. To introduce repressed memories and buried forms meant the possibility of recharging those meanings, even of changing the contexts into which they might now be placed. Given the similarity of Kluge's interests to Benjamin's, it is hardly incidental that the director relies heavily on metaphors of verticality and depth, which were common in modernist epistemology (psychoanalysis, realist theories of photographic technology, and so on). Kluge uses them to describe Gabi's efforts, in which the character assumes some form of exegetic "truth" might be found beneath layers of distortion and disguise. So infused is *The Patriot* with Gabi's efforts to excavate and uncover that at one point the film asks the question of how deep into the earth one may legally dig.[4] Once more, taking his lead from Benjamin, Kluge says, "What had been mere commodities for earlier times are for the amateur archaeologists who dig them out, treasures," a point Miriam Hansen has developed. She writes that Kluge's films "engage in salvaging historical rubble from the drift of amnesia, taking on objects as cumbersome as the battle of Stalingrad" or as small as the dead soldier's knee that narrates *The Patriot*, exemplifying what she calls "events breaking into discourse." "The method," she continues, "is allegorical . . . wresting fragments from petrified contexts and inserting them into a new discourse while preserving their strange and jarring character."[5]

Ruins have fascinated Kluge since his first short film, *Brutality in Stone*, which opens on the architectural debris of Nazi meeting spots in and around Nuremberg. Their function as material witnesses is confirmed by the accompanying voice-over: "The deserted structures of the Nationalist Socialist Party reactivate, as stone witnesses, the memory of that epoch, which ended in the most horrible catastrophe of German history." It is only superficially contradictory to say that ruins show the transitory nature of social and political systems as well as the capacity of these systems to endure. Much the same thing was the case for Benjamin writing before the Shoah, for whom nineteenth-century bourgeois culture was a chief reference point, as Susan Buck-Morss stresses in her analysis of the *Passagenwerk*.[6] The same tension is evident in his rumination on history, in which ruins offer the uncontestable evidence of the victor's spoils and also the "barbarous document of history." Benjamin makes the point in his famous analysis of Paul Klee's 1920 painting "Angelus Novus," the "angel of history" who casts a slightly terrified backward glance on the accumulated destruction that is the byproduct of historical progress. "Where we perceive a chain of events," Benjamin writes, "he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet."[7]

In his earlier, more optimistic work, Benjamin construed ruins rather differently. Allegorical readings of ruins and overlooked objects could reveal the "courage" of the *nonvictorious* for having once functioned as tools for work, play, fantasies, and so on. The very banality of these objects seems to give them their significance. It is this early Benjamin, the advocate of allegorical readings of everyday artifacts, with whom Kluge has the most in common.

Whether as ruins of official culture or of repressed hopes, objects are marked by their own material histories, contexts that are borrowed and temporary rather than fully possessed. This may be the most direct link between Benjamin and Kluge. Since objects do not exist without the inscription of history, temporality is evident even in the most inanimate things; hence the positioning of ruins as possible witnesses. In *The Patriot*, for instance, Kluge flatly states, "Here is a puddle. A puddle has a life span of three days"; then he introduces a bush as being forty kilometers from the Polish border, near a town "formerly called Koningsberg. Of course, the bush is not aware of this." In his 1964 "fact novel" on the battle of Stalingrad, *Schlachtbeschreibung* / *The Battle*, Kluge offers a tip from a military manual: in sufficient thickness, snow can protect soldiers from bullets. The same emphasis on the material life of things was voiced by survivor Primo Levi in his postwar memoirs: in the camps, he wrote, "death begins in the shoes."[8]

Objects are thus as much infused with history as history is with objects. But, as Kluge and Benjamin maintain, artifacts are not nearly as important as the uses to which they are put or the critical interpretations that draw out what Benjamin calls their "expressive potential," as Levi's observation also illuminates. Allegorical readings achieve that for Benjamin; Kluge postulates a form of active interpretation called *Zusammenhang*—literally, a hanging-together or connection-making.[9] Both reading strategies do violence to the original meaning(s) of their artifacts, much like a fragment does violence to the unity or integrity of a physical object, including, as we will see, the human body. Here the disunified (or, with Kracauer's mass ornament, speciously unified) quality of the artifact is especially important. Kluge's films are filled with fragments that don't add up or provide any unifying structure. No one history of Germany is available; no singular, idealized nation-body exists. Nor is there a clear alternative history to discover and apply. This apparent lack of historiographical strategy is itself a strategy, for Kluge makes it more or less impossible to believe that alternative histories already exist. As Hans Kellner states, "I do not believe there are 'stories' out there in the archives or monuments of the past, waiting to be resurrected and told. Neither human activity nor the existing records of

such activity take the form of narrative, which is the product of complex cultural forms and deep-seated linguistic conventions . . . there is no 'straight' way to invent a history, regardless of the honesty and professionalism of the historian."[10]

The epitome of that honest historian, Gabi Teichert follows a similarly circuitous route. Her approach to historical understanding recalls what Benjamin articulates in his "Work of Art" essay. Eschewing the hagiographic distanciation and inaccessibility that art required before mechanical reproduction, Gabi's tools dig directly into the "byproducts of history" (i.e., books) and thus eradicate the mythologizing aura of History. In this sense, Kluge's patriot is as probing as the cine-surgeon Benjamin hypothesized: it's just that she becomes, as Benjamin put it, "distracted" by her subject matter. In fact, *The Patriot* suggests that the sheer abundance of artifacts she uncovers generates the same paralyzing overload that Benjamin and Kracauer had criticized in commodity culture. Gabi, its seems, has accumulated too much—and processed too little.

Gabi recalls the sort of laborer, the "magical" producer of phantasmagoria, Benjamin associated with aesthetic production *prior* to mass reproduction, hinting at the carryover of older aesthetic and epistemological forms. In contrast to the illuminated, institutional public places in which Gabi appears—and where she seems the most unproductive and lost—her study/workplace is dark, dimly lit, not unlike a developing room. It appears to be underground. Secret and shrouded, the "buried," unacknowledged work she performs there is reminiscent of the vertical mise-en-scène of *Metropolis*, whose Workers' City forms the foundation for the leisure activities of the aristocrats above. In an equally literal fashion, Gabi "synthesizes" her findings, loading pages of books into a beaker filled with potion and placing them in a blender. Drinking her concoction to soak up knowledge, Gabi's act raises the question of whether internalizing the potion (recall modernity's call to absorb shock as a defensive measure) will enable her to break through the impasse of German history. It certainly dramatizes her (Kluge's?) desire to incorporate that Germanness into her identity and her very body.

As we are shown Gabi's underground lab, Kluge states: "The soul of a person who works hard is like a factory, workshop, cellar, or a witch's kitchen." Conducting experiments with gravity from a staircase, probing the heavens through her telescopes, with her frothy potions and fleece coat, Gabi recalls nothing less than a medieval alchemist. Here too ghosts of *Metropolis* abound, notably that of Rotwang, who like Gabi is obsessed with the past, in the form of his departed Hel, whose loss is displaced onto his robotic, missing hand. In *Metropolis*, Rotwang's anachronistic exis-

Historian as alchemist: Gabi Teichert in the "witch's kitchen" of Kluge's *The Patriot*. Courtesy of Museum of Modern Art Film Stills Archive.

tence is apparent in the pentagrams and pre-Christian alchemist's signs adorning his old building in the midst of Lang's glistening city of the future. Like Gabi, he is a producer—he of life, she of history lessons—and their unconventional modes of production make them pariahs in their respective modern communities (Rotwang's Semitic traits are not incidental in that regard). The two are presented as precinematic "magician-painters" who, Benjamin maintained, had given way to the "cinematic-surgeon."[11]

It is perhaps no accident that Gabi Teichert does not succeed at her task. There are a number of reasons why, perhaps not the least of which is her belief in a "patriotic" rendering of a history as full of carnage as Germany's. Her belief is presented as stubbornly naive, as is her faith in the retrievability of an authenticating truth through objects, interviews, or other means. Thus for as much as the film treats Gabi's work with affection (some say condescension), her character is unable to provide the *Zuarbeit*, the additional or supplemental work, to create meanings and connections (*Zusammenhänge*) on her own. Gabi cannot change the course of history, or even how it is taught. She is equally ill-equipped to handle the present, unable to hold her own in departmental meetings with male colleagues, whose responses to her range from patronizing irritation to supreme indifference.

In an important detail, Gabi's lack of basic survival skills is shared by another female character in *The Patriot*, Gerta Baethe, whom we are told perished with her children during a World War II Allied attack: "There were explosions heard in the distance. She was dressing the children when the bombs hit the air raid shelter of Koch's Printing Works. . . . It was no time for starting a strategy . . . , Gerta Baethe. The bombs fall on this woman in 1944. She wants to defend herself. But her last chance to check the misery of 1944 was in 1928. Gerta Baethe could have organized with other women." Interestingly, the film presents her story as "material for Monday's history lesson" for Gabi's class. Her case is read, interrupted, and discussed by several students as well as by Kluge's dry, nondiegetic voice-over. *The Patriot* makes two other possible references to Gerta. Before she is introduced, we briefly see an image interpreted by Kluge's voice-over: "A woman, two children, 1944, in a bomb shelter." Later, when we see images of a woman seeking shelter in what looks to be footage from an old fiction film, Kluge flatly states, "Gerta Baethe: strategy of below."

Strategies from above and below recur throughout the film in a variety of visual and thematic motifs. Gerta's and Gabi's digging into the earth "below" illustrates the latter; visual evidence of organization imposed "from above" is shown through numerous aerial points of view (especially as bombs are dropped) and the low-angle stills of contemporary and Nazi-era officials. Adding to this vertical topography is the information that in 1939, "Gerta Baethe knew a man from the Todt Organization who wanted to build canals [across alpine regions] and not an Autobahn across Germany."[12] In a stunning detail, once this unnamed character is introduced, Kluge's voice-over assumes the first person: "*We had it completely planned*," eschewing the disengaged third person that he uses to discuss Gerta, who was, after all, a victim for being *unable to plan* or produce a strategy from below. Given that Kluge's voice-overs seldom slip into the first person, the move here is conspicuous. As the film moves on, we see sketched plans for digging tunnels through the Alps and images showing passageways, links, and connections (forms of "organization") associated with the ground, as opposed to the organizational forms and strategies imposed "from above."

As a member of the Todt Organization (an official, if nonmilitary, auxiliary of the Nazi government, see n. 12), Gerta's friend can scarcely be associated with any meaningful kind of resistance, even if his disinterest in the Autobahn implies a possible deviation from official party lines or duties. With Nazi workers imposing forms of organization upon the earth, Kluge places operations "from below" onto party members *and* resistance figures, complicating what would otherwise be a simple top-down model of

power and resistance. This movement within oppositional spaces remains problematic, since Gerta's Nazi friend is able to occupy several spatial positions at once. He enjoys a privilege comparable to that of Corporal Wieland's knee, whose mobility, as we shall see, enables him to traverse all kinds of boundaries, even those of life and death. Perhaps this is the payoff for having been well organized, as military organizations usually are. But what does it mean to present a male Nazi party member as a success story, and Gerta as a "failure"?

In a way, *The Patriot* presents Gerta's inability to organize as entirely reasonable: "For a strategic perspective to start up, as Gerta wished on April 8th, seventy thousand teachers would have had to work twenty years." Organizing people, changing history, requires a lot of collective labor, calculated in Kluge's typically comic statistics. And, as he has written specifically in reference to the issue of organizing "women's labor," there is "no applied thought, no representational form, and thus no 'organization' that demonstrates a real ability to produce such alternative modes of living. Therefore it is not a matter of adapting women to politics, but of adapting politics to women's problems."[13]

Despite this claim, and despite Kluge's critique of history as a causal chain of events (Gerta's inability to defend herself in 1944 is somehow a result of her inability to organize sixteen years earlier) and his lampooning of progress as a statistically measurable phenomenon (seventy thousand teachers working twenty years), Kluge's presentation of Gerta cannot shake the sense of blaming the victim. The proportions of this blame intensify when Gerta's fate is compared to that of male victims of the war, as I have already noted with Gerta's anonymous male companion, and as I will argue in relation to Corporal Wieland's knee.

ALTERNATIVE LABOR FORCES: BURIED FEMININE ENERGY

> [Film's utopian strain in the] unsophisticated imagination . . . is buried under a thick layer of cultural garbage. It has to be dug out. This project of excavation, not at all a utopian notion, can be realized only through our work.
>
> To find is more important than to invent.
>
> —ALEXANDER KLUGE

If Gerta was insufficiently "organized," Gabi Teichert is even less organized, even if the consequences in her case are not fatal. No shortage exists of feminist criticism of Kluge for the way he mocks, patronizes, or silences

Gabi and the heroines of his other films, who serve approximately the same function: illustrating important but misguided attempts to change the conditions of one's circumstances. As Helke Sander observes about his work, "[O]ne always gets something in addition to what one wants, and possibly even gets. And when one gets this something one doesn't at all want but gets all the same, it unfolds its own dynamic." Taking a dryly comic and concrete example—poaching Kluge's own modus operandi—Sander illustrates by way of her experience as a child in postwar Germany. One Christmas, the store in her town offered ten holiday candles to shoppers who bought two kilos of foot powder. "In my mind I still see families struggling with huge bags of foot powder since, in light of the many power cuts, they wanted to provide themselves with candles beyond Christmas. One was not to be had without the other."[14]

It is not incidental that Sander uses a domestic example to elaborate Kluge's idea of the "unwanted within the wanted." (What to do with all that foot powder?) If the "feminine" labor process Gabi's work represents for the director is so crucial, what is supposed to be done with the unexpected results and undesirable byproducts Sander describes? Heidi Schlüpmann criticizes Kluge's elevation of women's strengths, which are simultaneously considered weaknesses by the "dominant reality principle."[15] It is only through recourse to stubborn, "unwanted" forms of logic or alternative "realities" that hegemonic perceptions can be dislodged for Kluge. But, as Schlüpmann argues, his exploration of women's *own* social and psychic fantasies never gets very far: their value as metaphor in this other process is what matters to him.

Gabi Teichert is a case in point. Her desires and fantasies remain stubbornly unarticulated—all we know is that she seeks "better material" with which to teach German history. We know that she is a female patriot (a contradiction in terms, for Sander),[16] and therefore "takes an interest in the country's dead." These, of course, are Kluge's interests, not necessarily those of women. Gabi's hands-on approach to history literalizes Kluge's "dialectic you can feel with your hands" (the "synthesis" of which is achieved as she drinks her potions). In historiographic terms, her method contrasts with that of idealist histories and the progressive teleological narratives they usually imply. At a school meeting, for instance, one of her unsympathetic male colleagues argues, "History is written in a certain way for certain reasons," with no intention of challenging the motives underlying such "reasons." If Gabi is illustrating, doing, or performing the kind of critical work advocated by the director, why then is his first-person voice-over never given to her, and why is she given so little of her own voice to begin with? What does Gabi (or Gerta) represent for Kluge?

VOICING HISTORY

B. Ruby Rich offers a particularly trenchant critique of Kluge's treatment of voice and speech in her analysis of *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin* / *Occasional Work of a Female Slave* (1973). Its heroine, Roswitha, is like Gabi in that she tries to work for social change (as an abortion worker) but ends up alone and disaffected. Rich argues that although Kluge's female protagonists are given sympathetic goals, he maintains a detached, nearly condemnatory distance from them: "Pretending to offer a sympathetic analysis, Kluge instead offers a frame-up."[17] This is formally achieved through narrational voice-overs and intertitles. Rich goes on to note, "The narrator holds a position of omniscience as a deus ex machina privy to information unavailable to the film's characters and inaccessible within the film text. In this guise, the narrator quickly becomes the favored replacement for the viewer in search of identification. The narrator, in his display of wit and wisdom, wins the respect of the viewer over the course of the film. The viewer . . . unit[es] in a spirit of smug superiority with the narrator over and against the character(s)."[18] The silencing of female characters that Rich condemns in Kluge's voice-overs becomes even more important when women are placed into operatic contexts, as we shall see in the discussion of *The Power of Emotion.* Contrasting *Occasional Work* to Sander's *Redupers,* Rich simply calls Kluge's work "anti-feminis[t]."[19]

Helke Sander is another outspoken critic of Kluge who uses his techniques and terms for her critiques. Her 1984 film *Der Beginn aller Schrecken ist Liebe* / *The Trouble with Love,* for instance, was in many ways a response to *The Power of Emotion,* adopting its fragmented story style and using a *female* voice-over to challenge Kluge's representations of women. Discussing *The Blind Director* (which Sander humorously wanted to retitle "The Assault of the White Man on the Rest of Time"),[20] she argues that, like "his thesis that our emotions are locked in various [historical] stages of development," Kluge's *own* attitude towards women is arrested in 1529, before Copernicus changed the idea that "the sun still revolved around the earth and the male was in god's image, the focus of creation."[21] Interestingly, and despite this stinger, Sander states in the same piece that "his anti-drama is a form . . . his form of kindness," that opens itself up to new uses, *deliberately* activating undesirable repressed desires.[22] (It is highly improbable, for instance, that Kluge's lapse into the first person with the man from Todt was unintentional.)

Both as solo author and in his sociological work with Oskar Negt, notably *Geschichte und Eigensinn* / *History and Obstinacy* (1981) and *Öf-*

fentlichkeit und Erfahrung / *Public Sphere and Experience* (1972), Kluge devotes considerable time to forms of labor that he maintains Germany leaves underutilized and unvalued. These ideas are strongly influenced by modernist ideologies and Frankfurt School marxism, as is clear by the value they give productivity and labor and their concern with alienated labor. In this view, it is not surprising that Negt and Kluge describe these untapped, repressed forces in terms of human energy and labor. So important is the idea that they widen labor's customary definition to include epistemological forms and the production and organization of society at large. By viewing labor-force as more than a factor of commodity production, Negt and Kluge reject classical marxism's idea of the economic base as a causal phenomenon, since the aspects of labor that concern them are precisely those that *escape* economic determination. For them, capitalism simply cannot account for all forms of human production. Yet, as Christopher Pavsek notes, in advocating "strategies from below," they effectively reconstruct the topography of the base-superstructure model they reject. [23]

For them, this potential labor force entails ways of thinking and organizing that are currently excluded from what they somewhat anachronistically call (even in 1972) the "bourgeois sphere." In metaphors pertinent to *The Patriot*, they argue that that which lies buried, when activated and organized, has explosive potential; it can form a constituent part of a number of alternative, unpredictable "counter public spheres." Like Kluge's careful refusal to present alternative histories as singular or unified, this labor-form is not conceptualized as altogether separate or "other," not a utopia situated at the far end of a social spectrum awaiting recognition or dusting off. Born of bits and pieces, this alternative sphere never quite adds up, functioning as a potentiality or, again, "the unwanted within the wanted." Misunderstandings, gaps, or details that escape full mastery or understanding, for instance,[24] contain "the raw material of protest and the potential beginnings of a 'proletarian' or 'counter public sphere.'"[25] Thus he was concerned with both used and unused parts of a social past, like untapped labor or emotions, or behaviors that don't "fit" within institutionalized, accepted notions of experience. In stressing their obstinacy and persistence, Kluge (theoretically at least) deprives them of the sense of being victimized, an idea that is crucial to the survivors depicted in *The Power of Emotion* and *The Patriot*.

Negt and Kluge wrote *History and Obstinacy* while *The Patriot* was being made, and the dense sociological treatise shares some of the film's unusual features. A highly atypical academic work, it refuses generic boundaries and conventions, with theoretical exposition abruptly breaking off; pages are punctuated by quotations, photographs, drawings, fairy tales,

Der Erkenntnisprozeß sucht zunächst entlang der parteilichen Haltung. Er sucht das Erkenntnisinteresse auf. Das Erkenntnisinteresse sucht den gegenständlichen Horizont ab: Welcher Erfahrungsgehalt ist in der bisherigen Behandlung ausgegrenzt worden? Es sucht ja nach Auswegen, da es sich als Interesse gar nicht hätte, wenn es nicht in Not wäre. Alle folgende Arbeit im Erkenntnisprozeß besteht in einer Art selbstregulierenden Reibung zwischen Interesse und dem Material. Es ist eine Art Rechtsstreit. Habermas, *Erkenntnis und Interesse*, 4. Aufl., Frankfurt/M. 1977, S. 112: »Wollte man die philosophische Diskussion der Neuzeit in Form einer Gerichtsverhandlung diskutieren, wäre diese zur Entscheidung der einzigen Frage einberufen worden: Wie zuverlässige Erkenntnis möglich sei.«

Nr. 10023. Boxer
aus rotem Gummi, mit Stimme, 10 cm hoch
Stück 90 Pf.

Abb.: »Hähnchen, Hühnchen und du, liebe Kuh, was sagst du dazu?«

Collagistic social theory in Negt and Kluge's *Geschichte und Eigensinn* / *History and Obstinancy,* p. 488. Courtesy of Zweitausendeins Press.

musical scores, and so on. Whether in scholarly books or collagistic films, such eruptions of inappropriate, "irrational," creative bits give evidence of the unwanted functioning within the wanted. They offer partial, unfinished forms of the alternative social and epistemological organizations Negt and Kluge describe—a means of glimpsing into a nonmaterializable Real. Moreover, it is in *History and Obstinacy* that the term *Zusammenhang* is introduced, and its countless cracks, dislocations, and lacunae enjoin us to play "construction worker" and build meaningful connections.

Although presented as a botched opportunity, Gerta Baethe's case remains critical for Negt and Kluge. Rather than restore neglected stories at individualized levels (as Steven Spielberg did with Oskar Schindler), they

prefer the potential of collective organization, *Zusammenhang*, and coalition—preferring the cooperation *among groups* and not individuals. As Kluge argues in *Zur realistischen Methode*, "Any of these modes of production, any class in itself does not possess the key for its emancipation."[26] Kluge would use this same argument against feminists to explain that characters like Gabi were flawed for seeing solutions only as individuals—overlooking that he made them that way. Gerta Baethe's failure to organize does not become any less unproblematic in the face of this position, since she is blamed and victimized in the process—a puzzling detail in light of Kluge's polemical stance against victim mentalities. Perhaps Gerta is an obdurate piece of the unwanted within Kluge's own body of work.

Negt and Kluge controversially describe the untapped "productive force" as *feminine*. They maintain that this feminine mode of production is a residual of an earlier, matriarchal mode of production eclipsed by capitalism (their argument is reminiscent of Engels's history of the bourgeois family in that regard). Capitalism here is a negligent father, a system unable to fulfill, respond to, or even acknowledge human needs. Feminine productivity apparently acknowledges need, and does so, according to Negt and Kluge, *in the exemplary form of motherhood*. Their nearly biological exemplification of women's "labor" has drawn heated and justifiable criticism from feminists for decades, and Kluge has had a difficult time dispelling the idea that his concept of femininity is somatically driven. Debates were especially intense after the release of *The Occasional Work of a Female Slave*, prompting a flurry of exchanges between Kluge and members of *frauen und film*.[27] While this is not the place to reproduce that debate, it is worth underscoring the tension between Kluge's contention that the undercompensated "feminized" labor capacity is a consequence of *socio-historical* phenomena and the weight he places on women's labor in childbirth and child rearing. On the one hand, one could construe his literalized examples of female labor as part of his materializing aesthetic—Kluge refers to bodies as "sites of social experience and political resistance," after all.[28] Yet that doesn't change the fact that he fails to examine these resistances beyond the narrow symbolic function ascribed them, nor does he consider the historical and social particularities of women's labor.

To be sure, Kluge and Negt's binarist presentation of male/female systems, forces, or historical epochs is a product of its time (male-female oppositions were common in the 1970s, even in feminism). Yet it has never been enough to reverse the equation and devalue the masculine term (linking it to an alienating capitalist system, for instance), and associate femininity with pre- or post-capitalist alternatives, especially when they are encumbered with such clichéd qualities as "nurturing." (Indeed, it is highly

improbable that Gabi is trying to dig out a repressed feminine economy.) The way in which Kluge's work privileges female over male terms banks on glaringly conventional, romanticized understandings of femininity. As Heide Schlüpmann has noted, although Kluge gives a "feminine mode of production" the potential to disrupt conventional structures, femininity and women are given no place to exist outside of the reproductive family.[29]

The repercussions of these theoretical positions are played out on the human figures that inhabit Kluge's diegetic worlds. Female leads operate against a backdrop of unsympathetic male characters and masculinized institutions: Anita G is shuffled from one cold place/man to another in the West Germany of *Yesterday Girl*; the misguided Ferdinand is overinvolved with his guard duties in *Der starke Ferdinand* / *Strongman Ferdinand* (1976). As even these characters establish, the assembled "fragments" and "ruins" Kluge calls bodies get marked and gendered quite differently. Women's bodies are constructed in terms of (illogical, blundering) potentiality in Kluge's films; male bodies as (unmoving, blundering) actuality.[30] Neither sex succeeds in narrative- or character-centered terms, and in contrast to the clean metaphoric correspondences of films like *Germany, Pale Mother* or *The Tin Drum*, the body itself—be it male or female, German or not—is a haphazard collection of fissures, potentials, pieces. The fact that it never functions as a totality suggests how open "it" is to change, to alternatives, even to resistance. But Kluge makes no guarantees about those outcomes; indeed, they don't occur in his films, recalling Fassbinder's Franz Biberkopf and Elvira. To cast it a bit pessimistically, modernist (and postmodernist) fragmentation, so epistemologically, hermeneutically, and even politically cherished, may be nothing more than the *inability* to "pull together" or to perform *Zusammenhang*.

THE BODY AS RUINED FRAGMENT

> In reality, every human being is a concerto of different capacities or elements. . . . Human images are composed of fragments; they are fragments of ruins. . . . Each experience, the experience of resisting as well as the experience of a defeat, constructs little personalities that coexist. . . . I want to develop a massive quantity of differentiating capacities, to differentiate the subcutaneous from the dominant aspects.
>
> —ALEXANDER KLUGE

> Aesthetics was born as a discourse of the body.
>
> —TERRY EAGLETON

For Kluge, the human body is an unstable power center of potential. It is inscribed with hegemonic patterns of work, thought, and feeling, as it is with opposing ones. This conception enables him, theoretically, to position subjectivity within history rather than have it simply function as a site of passive reflection. A line from *The Patriot*, "history is the history of bodies," is significant in that regard, with proof coming in the form of the knee-narrator, a "character" that has attracted as much critical commentary as Gabi Teichert, and one to which she has been often compared. The knee is all that remains of a young Corporal Wieland, a German officer killed just days before the end at Stalingrad, the notorious battle of 1942–43 in which thousands of German troops perished in an extravagantly ill-conceived campaign that Hitler, rebuking his military advisors, refused to see as hopeless. The knee comes from a poem by Christian Morgenstern read in Kluge's voice-over:

> A knee walks the earth alone.
> It is a knee, nothing else.
> It is no tree, it is no tent,
> It is a knee, nothing else.
> Once there was a man,
> Cut down in war.
> Only his knee remained untouched,
> Like some holy relic.
> Ever since:
> A knee walks the earth, alone.

The corporal's knee is an illogical, impossible leftover, the absurdity of whose narration is acknowledged later in the film: "You don't have to accept what I'm saying. Actually I'm not a knee at all—I have no speech organ. I'm not a kneecap, not the space behind it, the upper leg or the lower leg. They died. But I'm the connection, the joint." Absurd (and chatty) though it may be, the knee/director/"holy relic" shifts effortlessly from speaking poetry ("A knee walks the earth, alone") to bearing witness (detailing conditions at Stalingrad) to reciting Latin, covering in this way more ground than even our man in the Todt Organization. But its speech becomes progressively fractured and unsure of itself: "I say 'fundamental' too often," or "At this point I wanted to say something more . . . but I forgot what I wanted to say." It defensively asserts its superiority to the brain—the dead brain cannot quote Charlemagne; the brain cannot keep pace with the knee, ever "forward striding."

To an extent, the absurdity of the knee's being able to speak (much less the nutty things it says) undercuts its authority. But as the perfect

spokesman for Kluge's desire to "assemble large chunks of unacceptable or preposterous reality in films against which a patient, complex state of perception can fully exert itself,"[31] that divestiture remains half-hearted at best. One recalls Nancy K. Miller's remark in the 1980s about theories of the death of the author: "Only those who have it," she wrote, "can play with not having it."[32] That "play" is all the more resonant since Kluge speaks as the narrating knee, assuming the first person for just the second time.

In addition to having the apparent respect of the film's director, the nomadic knee has that of his fellow dead as well: he tells us that they refer to him as "the Father of Accuracy." Even the soundtrack pays him an indirect, troubling homage. After introducing Gabi Teichert, we see film footage of barely identifiable war carnage through a red filter, over which is played the powerful theme for Alain Resnais's documentary on Holocaust memory and responsibility, *Night and Fog* by Hanns Eisler. Although the music helps concretize the historical context of the abstracted, manipulated images at this point, it does so from a very different perspective than it did in Resnais's film. Anton Kaes observes: "This musical quotation may hint at a consciousness that does not want to exclude Auschwitz from the patriotic *Trauerarbeit*. But even those who can appreciate the subtle allusion to the [theme] from *Night and Fog* are soon pulled back to the side of the *German* war victims because the music is combined with images of German soldiers at Stalingrad. The victims of the Germans at Auschwitz, Buchenwald, and many other concentration camps are not part of the picture."[33] Kaes is right to voice objections about using Eisler's piece to mourn the German military dead, given that it was initially composed to *honor* the dead that this military produced. As a fragment of these soldiers and their "ever-accurate spokesman," the Nazi official's knee becomes the recipient of the mourning in *The Patriot*, which in Resnais's text had belonged to Nazism's victims. (The piece makes another troubling reappearance when the man from the Todt Organization is introduced.) While it is difficult to imagine that Kluge intended this effect to be without irony or contradiction, irony is difficult to find.

The knee goes on to speak over a series of postcard-like images of Germany at its bucolic best—springtime blossoms, castles, landscapes—kitschy presentations of Nation replacing the previous red-soaked images of war. It is difficult to gauge whether these tacky images are offered as critique, or if the knee is simply more successful at summoning forth the "better [more pleasant?] material" of German history than Gabi is. Indeed, just as the patriotic history teacher is introduced as "taking an interest in Germany's dead," the knee, speaking for itself, remarks over these images:

> It's said that I'm interested in history. That's right, of course. I can't forget the story that I'd still be a part of something bigger, if Corporal Wieland, my former master, part of something bigger, part of our beautiful Germany. . . . As a German knee I'm naturally interested, above all, in German history: the emperors, peasants, blossoms, trees, farms, meadows, plants.

As "part of something bigger . . . our beautiful Germany," the knee is an obvious emblem of a limping, homeless nation, lamenting a lost unity that is as phantasmatic as the knee itself. But its speech, as well as its ability to speak, points to a peculiar, Klugian form of history that includes in its materials plants, body parts, buildings, and other neglected artifacts—the kind of buried matter Gabi might be excavating. Critics, however, have not failed to notice the contrast between Gabi's very physical historical work and the more cerebral abstractions of the chimerical knee. The film itself progresses along these very lines, in fact, moving from a dense melange of concrete "German" materials at the beginning—plants, castles, war footage, soldiers, and so on—to a highly abstract closing shot after Gabi faces the new year. Near the end of the film, the screen fades to a blank screen with a quote from Karl Krause: "The more closely you look at a word, the more it recedes." After these words disappear, Kluge adds the word "Germany." Over this image the final chorale Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is played.

Psychoanalysts have observed that if the dead keep returning, they must never have been "properly buried" in the first place.[34] Our roaming narrator does not disagree:

> I must clear up at once a fundamental error: that we dead are somehow dead. Wrong. We're full of protest and energy. Who wants to die? We march through history and examine it. How can we escape history that will kill us all? . . . I want to set things straight, no one is completely gone when they're dead. The knee remains. I speak; I am a part of people, a part of history.

The knee is "a part of history" that he passionately contends has been ignored. It dramatizes being cut off from history, and its logic-defying endurance is suggestive of the untapped histories and underlying labor forces in which Kluge sees so much potential. But how "cut off" is he really? Compared to fellow historian Gabi Teichert, who is a mere assembler and instructor of historical material, the knee is that as well as a *participant* in history. At once raw material and historian, wound and witness, the knee proves to be the central character of *The Patriot* and its most significant historian.

Even anatomy adds to the knee's overdetermined privilege. Comprised of the patella, a floating bone attached to the leg by fragile ligaments, its very structure puts "betweenness" into relief. We might recall here Kluge's remark in the preceding chapter about the "space between shots" and the "after-images" as the sites of cinema's truly "subversive work." The knee literally embodies the exegetic practice of *Zusammenhang,* "hanging betweenness,"[35] a joint and punning "articulation" of bodily tissue connecting calf to thigh, poetry to science, living to dead, shot to shot. (Not incidentally, Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus, Kluge's editor, suggested using the poem by Morgenstern.) All of this makes it easy to see why the knee ultimately fares better than Gabi, who cannot provide viable answers to the "Question of *Zusammenhang,*" the section in which she and her girlfriends struggle over Schiller's text to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. What the knee of *The Patriot* finally represents is less an object, character, or even a metaphor than a critical point of view: "As a dead knee I naturally have a different perspective on things." Gliding between past and present, living and dead, its position is akin to Klee's angel, "forward-moving, if backward-looking," inhabiting the in-between spaces so esteemed by Kluge.

By moving from character-body to wound and then following its existence after death, Kluge pushes Fassbinder/Raben's notion of physical "shock" into the realm of aftershock. To be sure, all of them want to unsettle conventional perception and thought, but Kluge is ultimately concerned with the aftereffects of shocks as materials in and of themselves. If, as we hear in *The Power of Emotion,* bodies can only take so much and then, after a point, they rise up and explode, what happens when the body has no choice, when explosion or trauma is imposed on it?

SOME SPEAK, OTHERS DON'T

Clinically speaking, trauma is an extreme form of neurosis in which patients "suffer from reminiscences," as Freud and Breuer described hysteria. Past traumas get articulated via delayed, displaced symptoms acted out by an unknowing body. Just as Breuer and Freud once commented that the hysteric experiences her life as both observer and participant, Cathy Caruth claims that trauma produces a "double telling"[36] between experience and articulation. We can see these kinds of divisions already taking shape in the corporal's knee.

Be they physical, psychological, or both, traumatic experiences incite later patterns of repetition, flashbacks, and countless other delays and displacements. So extreme is this disturbance to standard representation and

narration that for Peggy Phelan, trauma "make[s] a tear in the symbolic network itself."[37] For a film movement intent on exploring the past, it has another important aftereffect: it deprives the present of self-sufficiency. The past is also altered by it and cannot easily move forward into representation. Trauma is so overinflected with experience that it is rendered actually unbearable. Analysts maintain that people who undergo it understand it only retrospectively, not at the time of its occurrence. This disphasure between event and expression in traumatic remembrance leads theorists from Sándor Ferenczi to Shoshana Felman to argue that sufferers do not *experience* trauma as it occurs. Instead, it engages what Caruth calls "an inherent latency within the experience itself," a forceful residual power of the Real.[38] Ferenczi borrows the survivalist discourse of war and defense formation to describe the process: "Neurotic symptoms develop only after the state of a transitory disturbance of consciousness has disappeared and the men who have suffered the shock re-experience in memory the dangerous situation."[39]

Traumatic memory and representation thus reveal how inaccessible the Real is to us: it only surfaces in fragments, errors of speech, altered bodies. Historiographically, the process shows how remembrance overcomes retrievability, and that remembrance itself will be unsettled by the illogical forms that traumatic representation can take—not unlike the machinations of Kluge's films. The question this raises, then, is how it can be articulated at all, particularly in light of the ego/body's tendency to shield it from symbolization. What can the body say, what does it remember, how does it speak? For Caruth, the injury becomes "a voice that is . . . released through the wound."[40] The very word "trauma" is in fact etymologically derived from "wound."

In the New German Cinema, wounds appear frequently, staging historical trauma on particular bodies—Biberkopf's amputated arm comes to mind, as do the tattooed numbers on camp survivors' forearms. But even when trauma affects actual people—not just film characters—its scars and effects originate not from the body but from a source often characterized as otherworldly. In this way, trauma challenges the way that bodies and subjects are read and interpreted. The wounded remains of Corporal Wieland, for instance, can hardly be read through psychological realism. What all of this suggests is that when personal memory and trauma are activated, larger social stages are at work.

No shortage of scholars has considered the symptomology of the wound—and the divided, imperfect body it conjures up—alongside the German condition. For a country that has seen more disunity than cohesion or unity, the idea certainly makes sense. In that way, the wound exaggerates the mate-

Gendered wounds in "Whore with War Cripple [*Dirne und Kriegsverletzer (Zwei Opfer des Kapitalismus)*]," by Otto Dix (1923). Reprinted by kind permission of Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte.

rial consequences of such historical and political divisions. As Elsaesser notes, the concept of "die Wunde Deutschland" was well underway in the nineteenth century, with the Romantic notion of a "wound, caused by the divisions of class, region, religion, political affiliation and nationalist sentiment, that refused to close on the body politic of the nation-state."[41] For obvious reasons, the wounds of war figure prominently in these traditions, not just for signaling injuries that were sustained, but for memories that were disabled. Moreover, wounds signify not only a nation-body's losses, but the suffering it inflicts on others, further decentralizing and complicating the notion of German nation-bodies. It is worth recalling Syberberg's *Parsifal,* in which Amfortas's wound is exhibited on a tacky little shrine to the ailing ruler, a joke on the split within "the" German body.

Leslie Adelson pursues the idea in her study of female bodies in postwar German literature. Arguing that human cells are treated as carriers of

Disabled speech in Sanders-Brahms's *Germany, Pale Mother*

memory, Adelson zeroes in on wounds and mouths as "parts that speak."[42] Their importance, she argues, is derived from their liminal positions between interior and exterior, private and public, health and danger, silence and being heard. The point is not lost on the New German Cinema's many references to mouths in films like *The Tin Drum*, or *Germany, Pale Mother.* Even the fact that, in the latter film, half of Lene's face is paralyzed after her teeth are removed dramatizes the split between silence and speech, past and present, passivity and agency. [43]

As I noted in Chapter One, Freud's model of somatic conversion in hysteria influenced film scholars analyzing melodramatic excess in the 1980s. Yet over half a century earlier, in 1918, Sándor Ferenczi provocatively referred to postwar traumatic symptoms as "a museum of glaring hysterical symptoms"[44] of defense formations "in the service of the instinct of self-preservation against the repetition of the unpleasant occurrence."[45] These defense formations saturate *The Patriot*: the quirky reflections of the knee, for instance, intimate that it is protecting and repressing something. What is eluding symbolization; what are the wounds trying to say? The idea of wounds articulating hidden trauma is clearly central to *The Patriot*'s stylistic strategies. But as Adelson reminds us, there is no such entity as "the" body. Circumscribed in difference, bodies' wounds speak differently. And some do not speak at all.

Much as Kluge's work differentiates bodies of survivors in problematic gendered terms, official definitions of trauma (and of course, hysteria) reproduce these same biases, as Laura S. Brown has noted. The (then re-

cently updated) DSM III-R, for instance, clinically defined a traumatic sufferer as someone who "has experienced an event that is *outside the range of human experience,*"[46] such as war, genocide, vehicle accidents, or natural disasters (the italicized phrase is reminiscent of camp survivors who speak of their ordeal as an "otherworldly experience"). Brown goes on to compare that understanding of trauma to how women's traumas are usually viewed: privatized, occurring in dark bedrooms and homes, and whose sources or perpetrators are kept out of sight or earshot. Authorities treat these survivors, Brown observes, differently to those who survive a train wreck (or the battle of Stalingrad), no matter how similar their symptoms.

In this way, Brown notes how classical psychoanalysis masculinizes trauma and turns it into a public affair of widespread concern. By contrast, Freud's hysterical female patients suffered from the unseen, unaddressed traumas of day-to-day domestic life, recalling the unarticulated histories, forces, and experiences that Kluge also feminizes. Thus symptoms of traumatized war patients, widely experienced and publicly witnessed, seemed a less contestable fact than "ordinary hysteria," whose diffuse causes were difficult to ascertain. Indeed, World War I offered Freud, Ferenczi, Ernst Jones, and Karl Abraham an ample forum through which their theories could reach wider audiences. They used evidence of war traumas to challenge critics who disputed the sexual basis of neuroses, observing that if the same trauma could provoke severe neurosis in one veteran and not another, then war wasn't the primary cause of the symptoms.

Commenting on the physical nature of these symptoms, Ernst Simmel maintained, "The psycho-analytical explanation of the war neurosis has proved with wonderful clearness the correctness of the Freudian views on hysteria. . . . The body is the instrument of the mind upon which it (the mind) allows its unconscious to manifest itself *in plastic and mimic expression.*"[47] Such physical expressivity recalls how trauma can turn the body itself into a historical actant. Contemporary theory's focus on identity's performative nature in this way is not restricted to academic classrooms or to dragshow runways. Rather we see its operation in specific historical contexts, even situations as extreme as war, the staging of which demands unnatural and unimaginable human acts. Paul Fussell's study of literary representations of World War I, *The Great War and Modern Memory,* traces the war's metaphoric and conceptual "theatricalization" across a variety of genres—poetry, military instructions, and especially, memoirs. (World War II, he argued, would continue the "show" through cinematic metaphors.) Perhaps artifice and heightened performativity are effective ways to depict those traumas that can never really be conveyed.

Traumatic representation acknowledges that while there is an important history at work, no precise experience, event, or signified can be brought forth. This is not to say that it cannot be represented, but that it cannot be *recovered* by representation. As Shoah survivors have shown, narrating traumatic events does not really retrieve past events but rather is a form of indirect recovery. (Claude Lanzmann, by refusing to use archival footage in *Shoah*, acknowledged this idea.) That same irrecoverability also explains the repetitive forms that traumatic representation takes. The challenge is to find ways of moving past the vicious circularity we saw operating in melancholia and melodrama. Lanzmann seems to acknowledge this as well in the film's incessant returns to the train tracks near the entrance to Auschwitz.

The Patriot and *The Power of Emotion* are, to a certain extent, governed by traumatic representation. They deploy some very physical motifs: air raids, fires, injured bodies, excavations, and cold laboratories; trauma stalks their narrative strategies through illogical interviews, character silences, direct address to the camera, failed attempts to speak, and the unleashing of feelings that have no direct, appropriate correspondence to the situation at hand. Characters and scenes continue from film to film—not unlike the repetitive nature of trauma and hysteria.[48] Both obsessively present the power of natural elements (ice and historical "materials" for *The Patriot*, fire and emotion for *The Power of Emotion*), the means by which those elements are controlled (history books, fire brigades, opera houses), and the persistence of what Kluge calls at one point the "wishes, bodies, ribs" that don't fit in. Collectively, these details give a thematic and stylistic nod to the unconscious mechanisms of human memory. One of *The Patriot*'s most powerful intertitles neatly sums up the impossibility of historical retrieval and the residual power of the aftertrace. By adding the word "Germany" to the line by Karl Krause ("the more closely you look at a word, the more it recedes"), narrative truth, meaning, history, and nation reappear and recede, just like memory itself.

Claiming that memory can only restore indirectly is not the same thing as saying that memory is never accurate. But it is displaced, filtered. And it is in those displacements that people can momentarily extend themselves or draw others into their experiences. The Shoah continues to demonstrate the need to bear witness to the wounded identities history might otherwise silence or leave behind. Consider concentration camp survivors, whose subjectivity was effaced through the deadly machinery of the camps. Referred to as "pieces," their heads and bodies were shaved, not just to humiliate, but to make these people as identical as possible; numbers replaced names as signs of obliterated subjectivity. Shoshana Felman writes, "What constitutes the outrage of the Holocaust . . . is not so much death in itself,

as the more obscene fact that *death itself does not make any difference*, the fact that death is radically *indifferent*: everyone is leveled off, people die as numbers, not as proper names."[49]

In addition to being unable to experience or understand trauma as it occurs, the sufferer has little way of articulating it at the time. Dori Laub writes that the Shoah presented a "world in which the very imagination of the *Other* was no longer possible. There was no longer an other to which one could say 'Thou' in the hope of being heard, of being recognised as a subject, of being answered."[50] Primo Levi described a recurrent nightmare that plagued him even after leaving the camps, in which he would stand in front of family and friends. He spoke to them, but they carried on as if he were absent. Levi was surprised to learn that other survivors had the identical nightmare.

As I have already suggested, *The Patriot* seems to be looking for a recipient for all of its traumatic memory. Packed with direct stares into the camera (notably, Gabi's) and lines like the knee's "I have a right to be heard," its diegetic porousness helps produce the spaces and cracks through which to make potential connections. Filled with history's "stranded objects," discarded bodies, repressed energies, ruins, and debris, *The Patriot* seems to engage in a form of homeopathic remembrance—with poisonous doses of the past, old fragments put into new contexts and presented to listeners for them to make meaningful, personal connections to history. Eric Santner even singled out the film for consideration in his epilogue. But, as he argued, *The Patriot* ultimately does not create that kind of dialogue with alterity and supportive social space.

INTROJECTING HISTORY

As I noted in Chapter One, introjection is an important means by which autoerotic attachments are extended. According to Abraham and Torok, "By including the object—whence the name introjection—the process expands the self," including the instincts and desires attached to the object as well.[51] Constructing the self involves an ongoing system of introjections, a process they describe as "gradual, slow, laborious, mediated, effective."[52] Incorporation, by contrast, is a phantasmatic process that in a sense disguises itself as the introjection it is unable to perform. Instead of the self extending outward, incorporation brings a foreign object inward into the self, encrypting it and sealing it off from consciousness. In hiding the object and the loss it represents, it is a refusal to mourn.

The chief paradox of incorporation is that the foreign body is perceived as detached from the self precisely for being so deeply guarded and con-

cealed *within* it. The self, in short, does not deal with the other: "The more the self keeps the foreign element as a foreigner inside itself, the more it excludes it. The self," thus, "*mimes* introjection." In other words, incorporation goes through the motions of the more difficult psychic work of introjection: in contrast to it, it is "fantasmatic, unmediated, instantaneous, magical, sometimes hallucinatory."[53] Of course, such descriptions conjure up the world of cinema, itself a phantasmatic hallucination or magical performance. They also evoke melancholic representation, with its excessive stagings of memories that cannot be released. What concerns us in considering films like *The Patriot* is whether or not such stagings open outward to viewers and listeners.

Abraham and Torok's contention that "Introjection speaks. . . . Incorporation keeps still" becomes almost damning in light of *The Patriot*'s avowed interest in giving voice to what history leaves behind and in permitting certain dead figures to resurrect themselves in obstreperous protest.[54] The problem is having the knee function as sole survivor and wounded witness, which implies that only the experience of German troops was traumatic—thereby adding nation and militarism to the already gendered trauma Laura Brown observed. If Kluge laments the sixty thousand civilians who perished in the night Hamburg was bombed, he stops counting there. The film does not count non-German others nor assess the undesirable, murderous aspects of Germanness itself. It is a curious withholding in light of its formal mechanisms, stylistic strategies that would seem to allow open relationships like that to emerge.

Put another way, Kluge's/Wieland's/Morgenstern's knee initially suggests the possibility of articulating a previously unknown history. It raises the possibility of entering into a history of others to whom its appeals to listen are obstreperous and insistent. But what neglected alterity can this knee possibly represent? What does it mean to give the "right to speak" to the knee of a Wehrmacht official, to have it speak on behalf of the nation's dead? After the film was made, knees like Wieland's were honored at Bitburg by conservative real-life patriots Ronald Reagan and Helmuth Kohl, but these frightening realities only show the urgency of the questions. When a wound testifies, it is usually to its own repression and victimization; it is usually not victimizing, as the military knee would surely have been. Why didn't Kluge use the knee of a Pole killed during Germany's invasion? Or the knee of a camp prisoner whose leg had been amputated without anesthesia?

The Patriot's "traumatic" style seems to include the characteristics of introjection listed above. It boasts a dazzling array of still photographs, film footage, dreams, pictures, and musical pieces mixed and entangled in a way

that suggests psychic urgency and immediacy, particularly in its near-eschewal of conventional narrative form and linear logic. But in the end, that same presentational style, like incorporation, points at the *process* of introjection rather than its actualization. For the film does not open up to examine the fate of the Shoah's victims, restricting its concern to ruins such as the knee, the citizens of Hamburg, or the fictional stories of Gerta, her Nazi lover, and a few isolated others. If incorporation is a form of "internal hysteria" directed at encrypted/shielded/othered traumas, one might interpret *The Patriot* as the staging of the director's own traumatic memory through recurring obsessions.[55] Most notable among these are the bombs that the film repeatedly depicts falling on Germany. Anton Kaes traces this back to Kluge's childhood: at thirteen, Kluge witnessed the destruction of his family house in Halberstadt during an Allied air raid. This is one of the few biographical details the director divulges in interviews, and he has stated it repeatedly, so Kaes is correct to include it in his analysis of the film. Other factors may help explain—though not condone—the strange politics of difference and survival in the film. At the time of *The Patriot*'s release, there were pressing historical reasons to present German, or German-produced, images of German history. As I noted in Chapter One, Kluge, Reitz, and others had mobilized themselves to counter American-produced versions of the Holocaust; the German State of Hesse had just replaced History with Social Studies in its high school curricula, explaining why Kluge gave Gabi a job there.[56] These historical motivations aside, it is difficult to reconcile the film's conspicuous omission of the Shoah and of non-German histories in Germany.

SURVIVING DEATH TO TALK ABOUT IT

With the exception of burial ceremonies, death usually abolishes the social differences ascribed to bodies when they had been alive. "Paradoxically," as Elisabeth Bronfen argues, "this obliteration of gender, along with all other socially constructed features, is represented in Western culture through a gendered body, the superlatively beautiful, desirable *feminine* corpse."[57] Yet this "superlatively beautiful" female body is precisely what *recedes* in Kluge's work, and the body that supplants it is that of the Nazi soldier, Corporal Wieland. In another context, Kluge writes, "[A]s a personality, a man is a dilapidated ruin, a bearer of characteristics who lugs them around, as it were, in a sack or suitcase. With every social upheaval, certain pieces of this luggage remain behind. This is the basis for a specific, ahistorical radicality."[58] If "the dead are never as dead as one believes," we need to contrast

the knee, which not only lives, but gets to pontificate to boot, with Gerta Baethe, who remains simply dead. Her remains don't wander the earth, a "holy relic" of a nation's deceased; she is merely "Monday's lesson material." That difference is reinforced in a classroom scene in which an anatomy professor tells his students that the foot—the knee's close companion—does not "get enough recognition."

Since survival is intertwined with speech the obvious question *The Patriot* raises is that if feminine labor is such an esteemed force, why is the man's dead knee so vocal? Why is Gabi Teichert, equally concerned about "Germany's dead," so silent, unable to defend or even speak for herself? In the film's diegetic world, a colleague chides Gabi's quietness at a school meeting since, he claims, she had been "talking their ears off" earlier, condemning both her silence *and* speech. As I noted earlier, Kluge's voice-over speaks *for* her, as opposed to speaking *as* the knee or as Gerta Baethe's male companion. Gabi's speech, as Helke Sander notes, often takes the form of reading others' words—in contrast to the knee, which, literally born of another's poem, moves on to talk freely and obstreperously on its own.[59]

The construction of wounds, speech, and physical survival in *The Patriot* is troubling on a variety of levels. The trauma of war experienced by a knee is cruelly ludicrous when compared to the trauma experienced by the millions of others who were not defending Nazism or who were its direct targets. Whereas military, male bodies are kept alive to recount their stories, women are reduced either to unambiguous death or to the hysterical silence Gabi's colleagues would impose upon her. The obvious irony is that the buried female labor force Kluge extols for its political and theoretical potential fails to surface in *The Patriot*, whereas the male body part—of a Nazi soldier, no less—does, intimating that *this* is the repressed energy, the supposedly undervalued alterity returning for not having been "properly buried." Certainly Kluge was aware of the controversial nature of his choice, and at the very least, such a decision demonstrates that the process of *Zusammenhang* is not tied to a particular ideological project. Or perhaps this was a way for him to emulate characters like Gabi, who embark on an admirable aim to better their worlds only to botch it horribly, putting new structures to bad uses, leaving it for us to respond differently.

So we never learn about Gerta's experience, nor that of the other women with whom she was supposed to have organized. The exclusion of their histories, coupled with that of the victims of the Shoah, creates an unlikely climate for an I-Thou relationship of witnessing and testimony. Instead, that speech remains underground, unaccounted for, nor even *recounted*—a one-sided *Zusammenhang*. Was Gerta's sacrifice necessary for male agency and work to be made possible, whether as a destructive force,

like Wieland's, or productive, like Kluge's? Feminizing death and granting masculinity the potential of living on in spite of mortal wounds does little to upset the traditional conservative narratives of Christian resurrection or Freud's feminized "othering" of death.

To be sure, male victimization and resurrection play large roles in a number of films of the New German Cinema, which is populated by countless tyrants, vampires, and pitiful underdogs. But the wounds inflicted on male bodies in movies like *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (the aging newspaper vendor and, of course, Franz Biberkopf) do not deter them from carrying on, even undergoing, in Franz's case, a weird religious redemption at the abattoir. By contrast, female characters such as Mieze and Lina simply die from their wounds, just like Gerta Baethe, not living on as speaking fragments, holy relics, or historical witnesses. *Berlin Alexanderplatz* may compulsively restage Lina's death in flashback, but that ultimately gives us more information about Biberkopf's inability to break out of established patterns than about her.

THE SOUNDS OF GERMANY

In many ways, the score of *The Patriot* seems to help Gabi in her quest for "better" German materials. As Anton Kaes and Peter Lutze have noted, it is constituted overwhelmingly by German and Austrian pieces that are, in fact, key to giving structural coherence to the fractured, collagistic text: "The most disparate juxtapositions of images," Kaes writes, "are held together and united by music, mostly classical German pieces."[60] One conspicuous example occurs near the end of the film, as Gabi looks forward to the "new materials" the upcoming 365 days have in store for her. *The Patriot* concludes with an instrumental recording of the Chorale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Perfectly recorded, it seems to correct the earlier, damaged version she and her friends engaged with at the kitchen table. By withholding the lyrics, there is an additional sense that the women's attempts to understand the words are withdrawn as well. Unscratched, unscathed, "corrected," it is hard to detect much irony in this weighty sign of Germanness. Two years earlier, Syberberg had ended his epoch *Our Hitler* with a pristine recording of the same Chorale (with text), and as I argued before, there it is difficult to contest the piece's anticipatory sense of purpose, pride, and promise. Could Kluge be making a dry comment on Syberberg's exalted use of it as the finale to his "patriotic" *Trauerarbeit?* Or might he have considered the movement so much a spent, allegorical ruin that, like the film's male characters, it could be "resurrected

into positivity"? This final reading is widely shared. For all those who associate the Ninth Symphony with bombast and militarism, many more consider it—and the Chorale in particular—to generate a forward-looking, collective hopefulness. This is evident today in its present incarnation as anthem of the European Union. (Schiller's text was purposefully excised to dispel traces of German nationalism and to appease nations fearful of what a "united" Germany would bring into the European Union.)[61]

In the end, it may be impossible to resolve the film's uncritical use of Beethoven. Yet, however firmly "Germany" seems to be acoustically reinstated, it is rendered far more ephemeral and unstable in its visual presentation in the same final image, when the word "Deutschland" fades from view. That ephemerality is crucial, for whatever contradictory understandings of Germany *The Patriot* indicates, it stresses that the memories with which history and nation are entwined are lost to us. Although their aftereffects can be presented, the events themselves cannot be, much as "Deutschland" recedes from view in the one shot near the end. Interestingly, Kluge has stated in lectures that Germany is a country of contested borders and uneven histories, and is an imaginary state, much like the "imagined community" Benedict Anderson places at the heart of nationhood. One could argue that "Germany" is a disappearing object of *The Patriot*'s story line, just as Gabi's patriotic history of it recedes the more she struggles.

The risk that Kluge takes here is in making the Shoah recede as well. While acknowledged in modest details like Eisler's music, it is frequently pushed aside as the film concerns itself with losses inflicted on German soil or to German citizens and troops. Perhaps *The Patriot*'s surfeit of information is overcompensating for the inability of words and images ever to "make present" the enormity of that trauma. Perhaps the Shoah appears in thickly disguised, stylistic moments such as the old film footage washed in red. Yet because the film's examples rarely concern themselves with victims caused by German involvement, it is hard to pursue that kind of analysis very far. *The Patriot* operates according to processes akin to the *fantasy* of incorporation rather than to the *work* of introjection; it even points to the introjection of which it is incapable. Ironically, in taking in so much clutter, objects, and debris, the text hides or encrypts more basic traumas, foreclosing the possible "I-you" dialogue that talking wounds might engender, foreclosing that empathetic space in which we might receive what wounds have to tell us today. But if the film finally abandons that project, as Gabi must do with hers, its basic structures remain intact. For *The Patriot*'s traumatic style demonstrates the importance of empathetic confrontation and of making *Zusammenhänge* with alterity. Perhaps it *is* up to us after all to find "better material" for that work to begin.

4 Undoing Act 5

History, Bodies, and Operatic Remains: Kluge's The Power of Emotion

> In every opera that deals with redemption, a woman is sacrificed in Act 5.
>
> —*THE POWER OF EMOTION*

> For years I have been attempting through literary and filmic means to change opera stories: to disarm the fifth act. . . . We must work to develop an *imaginary opera*, to bring forward an alternative opera world.
>
> —ALEXANDER KLUGE

THE POWER PLANT OF TRAGEDY

Just as trauma and allegorical readings disable conventional narrative/historical forms, so too does opera, at least in the hands of Kluge, whose extraordinary *The Power of Emotion* blasts open its nineteenth-century forms. Scattered across the text like so many interrupted arias, unidentified rehearsals, performance fragments, manipulated film footage, stereoscopic mattes, time-lapse set changes, ironic voice-overs, fictional interviews, dozens of operas, and other European art music become the stuff out of which this 1983 film is literally made.

Why opera? For one thing, because opera generates and trades in fantasy, spectacle, music, and emotion. Music's affiliation with human feelings, besides providing a diversion from material realities, were key components of Romantic aesthetic ideology, which dominated nineteenth-century German music and continues to influence western concepts of musical production and function. Kluge, however, rarely allows music such escape or transcendence. If the Beethoven sing-along in *The Patriot* divests the Chorale of its transcendent luster, *The Power of Emotion* goes even further in deconstructing music, tackling music's institutionalization rather than music per se. For one thing, although Kluge does not appear to challenge the Romantic association of music *with* human emotions, he makes it clear that social and economic forces work to keep that association in place.

Kluge de-idealizes that relationship in no uncertain terms. For instance, we see selected scenes of an early silent film version of Verdi's *Aida* and hear musical quotations from the opera scattered throughout the film. But audiences cannot immerse themselves in the music or get caught up in its passionate story. Not only do we hear Kluge's ironic commentary over *Aida*'s presentation, but we are never shown a full performance of it, only fragments, rehearsals, bits of music going by, not unlike what Godard did in *One plus One* (1969). *The Power of Emotion* refuses to reproduce *Aida* and other operatic works whole, or even to identify most of them—credits do not even list sources, although the opening credits acknowledge the laborers who produced the live music at the Frankfurt Municipal Theatre and Opera. The book that accompanied the film's release identified a large number of music and film quotations, yet even there, dozens of references are unlisted. Neither the initial Prelude from *Parsifal* that opens the film nor the rehearsal of the opera's Communion scene taken from Syberberg's film of the same name is mentioned.[1] What is more, the opera-fragments presented are rarely synchronized. We hear pieces from *Aida* that come from another point in the opera than those depicted in the silent film version we're watching—a text that modifies Verdi's story line to begin with. Sixty-five minutes into Kluge's film, we hear orchestral music from the Prelude to *Aida*, and the vocal material that follows comes from an earlier point in the opera's story line than the film leads us to believe: Aida is reluctantly tricking Radames into revealing an Egyptian military secret and is overheard by her Ethiopian father. That, in turn, is overheard by the Egyptian princess Amneris, who screams at Radames, "Traitor!" After the sound fades out for a few seconds, Kluge resumes Verdi's music at a point that *precedes* where he left off and carries it through into the next film sequence. Kluge's voice-over also missummarizes some of the operas: Radames and Aida, for instance, are never freed from the tomb. In short, we have neither a reliable narrator nor a narrational agent. But perhaps this mimics the unreliable, fantastic nature of operas' stories. By withholding information and parceling it out in "incorrect" doses, Kluge is able to chip away at their fetish-value, treating them as so much cultural clutter. In so doing, he divests operas like *Aida* of their auratic lure and presents them with so much blood on their hands.

In a key passage to which I have already referred, Kluge calls the opera house a "power plant [*Kraftwerk*] of emotion" that processes valuable raw material into consumable goods. Rather than accepting the goods wholesale, however, Kluge turns to their production, focusing on the material *behind* the fantasies and *underneath* the spectacle, blasting them out in so many directions. By taking the bulk of his examples from the mid- to late

The "power plant of emotion" in Kluge's *The Power of Emotion*

nineteenth century, when tragic opera prevailed, Kluge moreover demonstrates that its melancholic emotions have little to do with the way that life is generally experienced, and nothing at all to do with possible personal, social, and historical change. For in these stories Kluge finds only the endless "dramaturgy of inescapable tragedy" filled with needless suffering, violence, sacrifice, and resigned, disempowered characters unable to change their destinies. By extrapolation, and following the lead of *The Patriot*, *The Power of Emotion* indicts conventional history, which, like opera and other story-telling forms, rarely questions its deadly outcomes, or how and by whom its narratives are produced and consumed.

Again like *The Patriot*, *The Power of Emotion* both solicits and frustrates interpretation. How to unpack such already deconstructive, critical texts? *The Power of Emotion* is even more collagistic and less narratively cohesive than *The Patriot*. Though fewer in number, the film's diegetic story fragments are more diverse in scope, and there are no central figures like Gabi or the knee to offer much in the way of continuity. *The Power of Emotion* therefore has to rely more on film style than on character, diegetic situation, or theme to tackle historical and historiographic issues. And whereas *The Patriot* stressed the importance of forgotten objects, *The Power of Emotion* concerns itself primarily with the objects or "matter" of human feelings. He presents them as harboring a potentially explosive, disruptive force because their needs, he shows, are simply not being met: avenues for their expres-

sion or release are inadequate. Like the unacknowledged feminine labor force Kluge postulated in his written work, human feelings lie fallow, ready to rise up to redress the injustices done to them.

If we accept that abbreviated, multiple story lines, scraps of film footage, photographs, paintings, old popular songs, and glimpsed opera performances are connected to emotions, then Kluge's film demonstrates their power by dint of sheer presentational force. These materials, and especially those connected to opera, suggest something more than can really be presented. His collagistic style creates fissures that are not simply indicative of absences, although they can do that, but are signs of what the Real cannot accommodate—as might have been the case with the Shoah in *The Patriot.* At the least, *The Power of Emotion*'s "ragpicker" style (the term is Miriam Hansen's), along with the huge volume of materials it presents, dramatizes the real challenge of *Zusammenhänge.* The point is directly made in a fictional interview during "The Opera House Fire" section. Ostensibly discussing Janáček's *The Makropulos Affair,* in which a woman drinks a potion that enables her to live three hundred years, an official at the opera house makes what in effect is a comment on *The Power of Emotion:* "There are really so many connections you could make, it is impossible to get them all."

Kluge's multidirectional critique of nineteenth-century opera constructs his subject variously as narrative form, historical phenomenon, cinematic precursor, and trader in unhappy feelings. For him, it is an industry that capitalizes on human misery, glorifies defeat, and disguises the material aspects of its production. Especially crucial is how tragic opera encourages audiences to buy into its fatalistic worldview, and Kluge aggressively directs his line of fire in that direction. He acknowledges the force of such large-scale emotional manipulation, as well as the untapped power of the stubborn, illogical, abandoned smaller emotions, which don't fit into the predetermined scenarios that institutions like opera, film, the legal system, romantic love, history-making, and war permit. Most of the operas' stories Kluge examines boil down to a struggle for survival, and the question of who survives will be raised throughout this chapter, as it was in the last. Why, for instance, as the opening quote states, does a woman have to be sacrificed in act 5?

In the face of all this deadly business, it seems imperative to produce some kind of alternative. *The Power of Emotion* is a rather unusual text in Kluge's oeuvre because it openly takes up that challenge. Although it deeply condemns the predetermination, inevitability, and fatalism of tragic operatic narrative, it offers more than deconstructive critique, more than ironic depictions of hapless characters struggling to change their personal

circumstances and outcomes. The text thus also seems to offer more to those of us outside of it. As Gertrud Koch describes it: "Opera thus becomes for him a pile of ruins left by the fatalistic course of the story, which he sets out to rearrange. Once exploded into atomized details—ruins—the power of fate dissipates, as does the efficacy of any narrative closure. He [Koch speaks of Kluge, but we might infer filmgoers] can now hunt for ways-out and give recommendations."[2]

It seems to me that these "recommendations" are much more possible than they were in *The Patriot*. *The Power of Emotion* contains a story fragment that literally undoes the deadliness Kluge associates with the last acts of tragic operas, giving a rare, if not altogether unironic, glimpse of optimism. In its final and longest sequence, *The Power of Emotion* follows what by any reasonable measure would be the murder of a character and his subsequent resuscitation by the couple that finds him. Because of Kluge's emphasis on the material aspects of human bodies—whether as historical ruin, operatic performer, carrier of emotion, or narrative victim—that resuscitation is particularly significant. (Small wonder that the film refers frequently to *Parsifal*, Wagner's operatic tale of redemption.) The matter recalls *The Patriot*, which bestowed redemption upon certain characters and withheld it from others. As we will see, *The Power of Emotion* continues to differentiate bodies problematically when it comes to their survival, sacrifice, death, and resurrection, but a better ending is in sight.

THE TALE OF THE INEVITABLE TRAGEDY: SPECTACLE, COMMODITY, AND WAR

Ironically, *The Power of Emotion* contains so *many* stories that one would be hard-pressed to call it a narrative film. It is just as difficult to describe. It opens with a time-lapse segment of the Frankfurt skyline at dawn and proceeds to shots of corpses, a birth, a funeral, silent film segments, stereopticon images, documentary footage, photographs, drawings, opera scenes, rehearsals, set changes, character interviews, parts of the opera house, and opera itself. These pieces are interspersed among brief stories in which, for example, a woman goes on trial for having shot her husband (introduced, like most sections in the film, with an intertitle, "The Shot") or a man is tried for having raped a comatose woman while "saving" her from a suicide attempt. Recurring characters include fortunetellers and matchmakers, opera stars and firefighters, prostitutes and pimps.

To establish the mid- to late-nineteenth-century European setting of the opera house, Kluge turns to a narrational form usually unconcerned

with historical precision, the fairy tale. In fact, he sets up the period as if it *were* a lost fairy tale, which in a sense it is, particularly within the history of capital. "Once upon a time," his familiar voice intones, "in the middle of the nineteenth century, all the valuable commodities of the world were assembled in London." Built for the World's Fair, the Crystal Palace was an official showcase for a variety of objects to entice, enthrall, and encourage consumers, a place of phantasmagoric display that was the progenitor of both the movie theatre and the shopping mall. This was a period of growing availability of commodities and the consolidation of their auratic lure. The film shows us sketches of the palace's artifacts, from domestic wares to the Krupps canon, the building's architectural plans, and a snapshot of the laborers who built it; we are finally informed of its destruction by flames in 1937, "just four years after the Reichstag. At that point, objects no longer had any parliament." The nondiegetic piano under this sequence is unextraordinary, if oddly gentle. It is Brahms's Ballade in G Minor[3] —for Kluge, uncharacteristically rooted in the historical period depicted.

Not all nineteenth-century hopes were dashed when the Crystal Palace burned to the ground. As Kluge's voice-over tells us, "Another project begun in the nineteenth century was the power plant of emotion, the opera house." The reference is the film's strongest shorthand to establish how industry, capital, and cultural forms are able to control something so nominally private and "uncontrollable" as human feeling. It is no accident that an extreme high angle introduces the state opera house in Frankfurt, a paragon of measured architectural classicism and an example of Althusser's Ideological State Apparatus. As a power plant, the opera's similarity to the "fantasy factory" of Hollywood is immediately clenched. In fact, Kluge presents them both as management centers of human emotions that control audience identification and expectation. In the context of late-nineteenth-century Europe, the opera house marketed its own illusions of grandeur and wholeness—the culmination of Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* that was theorized slightly earlier. As industrialized plant, however, its production is anything but all-unifying. It comes into being through a variety of compartments, and its workers come into contact with only one aspect of the final product. It is hardly coincidental that the opera and its grand spectacle flourished alongside the rise of industrialization, rationalized labor, and a middle class with growing leisure needs. Kluge underscores the point by presenting the opera house and its productions piecemeal, through extremely brief sections like "Lighting" and "Facade." The film even separates pictures of the blueprints of the Crystal Palace from the construction workers who executed them. In this detail Kluge stylistically conveys the fragmentary nature of the opera house's production and the heterogeneity

The frayed lines of the opera house in *The Power of Emotion*

required to sustain the image of wholeness and plenitude of its product. Profits from the opera house, moreover, are assured not just from its output but from the consumption patterns it produces and sustains. Almost completely unconcerned with opera as aesthetic or personal expression, *The Power of Emotion* tackles it as an effect of ideological, historical, and material forces, relieving it of all claims to aesthetic transcendence or to the creative genius of individual composers.

But the power lines of the opera house, as Kluge whispers to us, "were flawed from the start"—the opera house was never equipped for its task. Because it processes emotion into something too bombastic for human use, the power plant, according to Kluge's logic, is an institution grounded in ruination, an extension of the machinery of war, industry, and capital. Opera is what it just happens to spit out, just a singing ruin. And before we can rework the ruin, we must actively "undo" it, as he words it, putting a positive spin on what Catherine Clément had written in her *Opéra, ou la defaite des femmes* / *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, published in France just before the release of his film.

By focussing on tragic opera, Kluge reveals the extent to which "deadly outcomes" are rendered not just inevitable but desirable. They seal a contract with the public that he finds extremely deleterious, and the film draws equivalencies between what Kluge calls the "drama of inescapable tragedy" and the idea of history as an unchangeable narrative equally marked by

suffering, unhappiness, and mortal endings. According to *The Power of Emotion*, operas, the main product of the "Power Plant," are, like most cranked-out goods, by and large undifferentiated, a fact Kluge finds manifested in the relentless, repetitive nature of their denouements. In a humorous mock interview, a woman asks a well-known opera singer[4] how he can reveal "a spark of hope on [his] face" in act 1 knowing how badly things end in act 5:

HE REPLIES: But I don't know that in act 1.

SHE: Yet you have played this role eighty-four times.

HE: Yes, it is a very successful piece.

SHE: Then you really ought to know the awful ending by now.

HE: I do, but not in act 1.

SHE: But you're not dumb.

HE: I most certainly am not.

SHE: Then at 8:10 in act 1 you know from previous performances what is going to happen at 10:30 in act 5.

HE: So?

SHE: Then why do you have a "spark of hope on your face"?

HE: Because I don't know act 5 in act 1.

SHE: Do you think that the opera could end differently?

HE: Of course.

SHE: But it doesn't, eighty-four times in a row.

HE: Yes, it's a very successful piece.

SHE: That explains the eighty-four performances. But it still doesn't have a happy ending.

HE: Do you have something against success?

The illogical, circular question-and-answer format is a staple in Kluge's repertoire. It usually occurs in scenes with judges, politicians, or other members of official institutions. Kluge himself appropriates these tactics in a famous exchange with Jutta Brückner, who had compared *The Power of Emotion* unfavorably to the profemale sensuality she found in Saura's *Carmen*, released the same year. Kluge declares that, for his part, he finds little in the way of emotions in Bizet's story, and calls for a Brechtian means of dealing with it. He states that when "Don Jose is about to stab Carmen," the proceedings should be "interrupted" in order to "discuss the situation." It must be said that Kluge's reference to the opera's dearth of emotions jars with his comment that "I have seen the opera *Carmen* 48 times, my sister has seen it 17 times, my father 108, and my grandmother

14. I can thus rule out the possibility that this beautiful opera suggests any way out of its dilemma, or that it depicts any actual experience."[5]

Kluge's obsessive counting and providing figures shows the limits of quantitative data and rationality in explaining historical outcome, as we saw with the number of laborers it would have taken to save Gerta Baethe or the fatally useless ciphers and ledgers of *The Battle*. They also reveal the director's fascination with historical and temporal manipulation, and with time more generally. His production company, for instance, is named Kairos, after the Greek word for time that arrives in unexpected, ephemeral, productive flashes, in contrast to *chronos*, the constant, developmental, logical aspect of time that clocks keep. *The Power of Emotion*, for its part, places feelings on their own timelines, stressing their endurance as well as their capacity for "sudden and brutal explosion." Particularly important are what the director calls, in a typically somatic metaphor, "subcutaneous" emotions, just as Germany's "buried" history had been approached in *The Patriot*. A brief scene in *The Power of Emotion* shows a bomb being carefully dragged out of a forest, where it had been lying for "thirty-eight years, its fuse intact." Cinema's own ability to protract, condense, and manipulate time is also in evidence from the extraordinary opening scene, in which time-lapse photography moves us quickly from late night to early morning. Elsewhere, film time and movement are speeded up when an extreme high-angle shot reveals an extremely rapid change of opera sets.

Much like the plot of *The Makropulos Affair*, the various references, techniques, and materials in *The Power of Emotion* cut across a wide path of history. Clips of silent films, like Lang's *Kriemhilds Rache* / *Kriemhild's Revenge* (1924), and the use of mattes, iris, tinting, and stereoscopic views invoke the early years of cinema history. We have sequences from Nazi cinema, as well as documentary footage of a contemporary high-rise fire; it shows us illustrations of the Tower of Babel and of Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden. The protracted life of the king's daughter in Janáček's 1926 opera is especially significant in this regard. Because she has lived three hundred years, Kluge calculates, she has "lived through twenty-eight wars." Thus Kluge does not let the connection of temporal manipulation to historical and historiographic processes go unremarked, and he is quick to observe the violence involved therein. Accompanying a time-lapse opera sequence, he states: "There is an important change in *Tannhäuser* between acts 1 and 2. A Christian castle is built in a pagan landscape in less than twenty minutes. *[Pause]* Because of the abruptness of the historical process, there is no happy ending." Kluge's twist on historical causality here recalls his intimation that the excessive accumulation of commodities led

directly to the 1937 immolation of the Crystal Palace. His interest in causal effects and endings are equally evident in the voice-over that accompanies images of *Kriemhild's Revenge*: "This child," he announces, "does not have much time to live." To "give away" a story's end, as the phrase implies, is to cheapen its worth and presumably lessen its impact. And that is what *The Power of Emotion* wants to do: preempt fate.

Kluge brings to light other murderous demands of narratives and histories governed by inexorability and fate. *The Power of Emotion* is especially concerned with the *Zusammenhänge* among opera, emotions, and war. It reflects war's connection to passion by situating a number of love stories in wartime (as did *The Patriot*) and selecting operas set in periods of military or political conflict, like *Aida* and *Tosca.* Stories of love and war are constantly interrupting and interweaving with each other. The film draws equivalencies between the narratives of conventional romance, war, and opera; their tales are the products of the same power plant, the same deadly culture industry: "It begins with being in love and ends in a divorce. It begins in 1933 and ends in ruins. The great operas begin with the promise of intensified feeling and in act 5 we count the dead." The grimness of this recipe for musical and political stories has been noted by Hansen, who writes of Kluge's work in the late 1970s that "romantic love itself appears complicit with the catastrophes of German history, because it nourishes fictions of fate that prevent any alternative course of action and usually lead to murder, suicide, mass psychosis and war."[6]

A SYMPHONY OF RUINS

An example of this complicity appears in the opening segment. Extreme long shots depict the skyline of Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany's financial center, from the dark of night to just after sunrise. Buildings shimmer like gold monuments reflecting the early morning sun; the sky's mutating clouds and colors are stunning; the camera tracks a plane and a bird flying overhead in the distance. Any reverie evoked by this serene segment, however, is immediately punctured, for it is impossible not be reminded of the opening of Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1935) as Hitler's plane soared over the adoring crowds, a god ready to land.

Further overdetermining the reference, Kluge uses Wagner to underscore the entire sequence. Curiously, he selects the Prelude to act 1 from *Parsifal,* and not passages from *Das Rheingold,* the more obvious choice given the shimmering buildings along the Main River that contain so much lucre of their own. But the selection is perfectly logical.[7] The quest

for the grail (the redemption money might buy) is already bankrupt; the music, already damaged goods. Profit and power are displayed across the scene: the presence of *Parsifal* connects it to the lucrative nineteenth-century "power plant of emotions"; visually one sees the "banks" along the Main, and then, with *un coup de pouce* from Riefenstahl, we get the Third Reich. In this way, a small piece of music, stripped of its transcendence and holy grails, can forge historical connections all the way from Wagner's Romantic nineteenth century on through to the twelve-year "thousand-year Reich" and on to Germany's "economic miracle," the post-war capitalist "recovery."[8] Music is not going to be innocent here.

Parsifal's importance to *The Power of Emotion* is immense, in no small measure because of its investment in innocence, redemption, and faith. Wagner's last opera (1892), *Parsifal* combines these elements in a heady, transcendent mix that works along and outside of the tragic parameters outlined in Kluge's cinematic study. Based on the story of the Fisher King and early grail legends, the opera opens in the castle of Monsalvat, where the Holy Grail containing Jesus' blood from the cross is kept. The Knights of the Holy Grail are distraught because King Amfortas refuses to conduct Communion: Amfortas suffers from a wound in the thigh that will not heal. His wound is fraught with sexual and religious overtones, having been inflicted by the spear that pierced Christ's side on the cross (in Wagner's version). Stolen by the evil magician Klingsor from the knights' realm, the spear was then used upon Amfortas when he was seduced by Klingsor's enslaved sorceress, Kundry, an act that betrayed the sanctity of the grail. (Klingsor, it should be added, castrated himself earlier when he too had succumbed to Kundry's charms.) Only the touch of the tip of that same sword, when retrieved by a *reiner Tor* (an innocent fool) can heal Amfortas. Such a fool appears in the form of young Parsifal, brought before the court for having killed a sacred swan in Monsalvat. Parsifal witnesses the ritual of the grail performed by the suffering king, but fails to understand it. Chased away, he encounters Kundry in Klingsor's magic kingdom and rejects her sexual advances beyond a kiss. At this moment Parsifal is able to empathize with—and thus understand the significance of—Amfortas's suffering. The same act establishes Parsifal as being of sufficient innocence to deflect and regain the spear (the moment Parsifal makes a sign of the cross with it, Klingsor's kingdom falls to dust, just like Dracula). After wandering many years, Parsifal returns to Monsalvat, where he sees Amfortas begging his knights to kill him. It is Good Friday. Parsifal is made king and then heals Amfortas with the sword. Kundry receives absolution for her sins and is granted rest from her wandering through death.

Wagner's text is so central to *The Power of Emotion* that Kluge respects its sequence by having the Prelude to act 1 open the film. The music attracts our attention all the more because *Parsifal* is not the Wagner we would have expected to accompany the glistening images. In light of Kluge's interest in the story lines of operas, however, *Parsifal*'s presence is not surprising—indeed, it is its plot and themes that seal the connection to the film. Its concern with redemption, "holy relics" and wounds, for instance, easily recall the kinds of resurrections and wounds introduced in *The Patriot.* We can see that the knee's fate to "wander the earth" is shared not only by Parsifal but by Kundry, condemned to that destiny for having mocked the agonies of Jesus on the cross. Unlike her already "holy" military counterpart from *The Patriot,* however, Kundry wanders in search of redemption, which she finally receives in the form of death.

The Power of Emotion also draws from Verdi's *Aida,* as mentioned above. The opera is identified through explicit references: we see the early film adaptation of it as Kluge's voice-over gives details, and we hear its familiar music. Its tale also ends badly (indeed fatally, for its lovers), but Kluge's interest in it is as a text not of redemption, but of physical suffering. Of the many operas quoted, it is the most rigorously submitted to material and materialist readings, as we shall see. Another work central to the film's concerns and which recurs throughout is the lesser-known *Lemmikainen Legends / Four Legends from the Kalevala* by Sibelius. Like Wagner's *Ring Cycle,* it takes its stories from legend. Lemmikainen is a sort of Finnish Siegfried who travels across the seas, visiting Maidens on the Island of Saari (a segment of which is heard in the film), and ends up being torn apart in Tuonela, Finnish hell, in yet another fatal consequence for a wandering figure.

In addition to establishing the centrality of *Parsifal* to the film, the opening scene introduces the importance of natural elements: water (rivers, streams, grottos), air (conveyed through time-lapse photography of the sky and through the sounds of howling wind), and, especially, fire. If ice and the lifeless rigidity associated with it dominated *The Patriot* (see Chapter Three, n. 4), *The Power of Emotion* is suffused with heat and fire. Given its preoccupations, this is hardly surprising: "One speaks of burning passions," the voiceover states, "never cold ones." In addition to the glistening skyscrapers of downtown Frankfurt, we see footage of an actual high-rise on fire. This is just after Kluge explains the fate of the Tower of Babel, whose inhabitants were "destroyed for building high-rises" and for their "confusion of tongues," like his wild lesson in historical causality on the fate of the Crystal Palace. Red filters and tints appear with regularity; the prostitute Betty sets fire to bills she has just earned working for a pimp;

The state funeral in *The Power of Emotion*

another character tries to unearth the fate of a woman who had tried to surrender during the war while her village was in flames.

One story, "The Opera House Fire," which also occurs during an air raid, features a firefighter impelled to enter the prop room in order to find Parsifal's grail. It seems that, like the film, he cannot keep away from that opera or its artifacts. Once there, the camera tracks over various props, like John's outrageously artificial head on a bloody platter. What a surprise for the firefighter when he finally reaches the grail to find it empty! The hollow container, with its chintzy promise of redemption, dramatizes how opera's tragic stories and unhappy conclusions rely on artificial, worn-out cores. Even at the time of *Parsifal*'s initial production, the grail was obviously a dated fantasy object, a throwback to earlier legends. At the same time, to think along Benjamin's lines, the vessel's emptiness enables it to be refilled with new meanings that might go beyond the illusions it used to house. Again it is worth recalling Kluge's remarks about film's productivity being found "in the gaps" between shots, where "nothing" actually happens.

Another central project of *The Power of Emotion*'s opening segment is to interrupt musical reverie, fantasies of transcendence, and glorified sorrow. Following the shots of Frankfurt is a completely silent presentation of what looks like World War I footage. All that is clear is its overwhelming sense of death and chaotic carnage. After this, we cut to a quick, equally bloody shot of the birth of a child. The next shot returns our attention to

death, but the depiction is quite different. Here it is sanitized, sanctified, and cast in utterly noncorporeal terms. Kluge documents an actual state funeral in which an audience of high-ranking officials and bureaucrats is seated in excruciatingly neat rows, almost identically dressed.[9] A small group of musicians performs Bach's Air on the G String at an appropriately slow, respectful tempo. Yet should listeners be inclined to lose themselves to the beauty of the piece, the camera humorously reveals Helmut Schmidt dozing off, spoiling the neat seating arrangement. In a near-textbook example of dialectical montage, Kluge's initial sequence establishes his concern with excavation, burial, and the dead, moving from the material facts of suffering, birth, and death to their transcendent treatment in official West German ceremonial culture.

PIECES OF OPERA / OPERA IN PIECES

According to Kluge's voice-over, our emotions always want a happy end, yet the outcomes that operas crank out (just like war) do not provide it. There is no correlation of supply and demand. As power station or factory, the opera house overproduces emotions so that they become too bombastic—or overcooked, to borrow the film's leitmotif of fire. Yet the section announced by the intertitle "The Power Plant of Emotion" is laughably brief. "Something went wrong in the initial stages," we learn. Then the next title, "The Power Lines," immediately appears, after which a tracking shot of fraying cable reveals the power lines of the opera house "in a catastrophic state."

This particular sequencing of shots, like the one contrasting images of bodies in birth and in death, is deliberate in its effects. Kluge submits the opera house to the same formal fragmentation as the operas themselves. Even the use of intertitled "sequences" divests operatic production of any awe-inspiring authority or seriousness, given their almost comic brevity. Moreover, as I noted earlier, Kluge's fragmented presentational style parallels the disconnected labor tasks, tools, and production modalities within the opera house. They of course produce a unified "product" that rarely acknowledges its constructedness and lack of unity. Opera, like film, tries to divert our attention from the disparity of art forms, genres, and techniques it requires (costumes, libretti, actors, singers, lighting, power lines) in favor of the melting pot Wagner advocates with the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Kluge, for his part, ignores that unity at every possible level. After the shot of the "catastrophic" power lines, we cut to a quasi-cameo of Gabi Teichert (Hannelore Hoger again, who plays other roles here too),[10] digging around out-

side, looking down into a pit through which a big pipe runs—a patriot's work is never done. Following this literal grounding of opera, the next shot, taken from inside the power plant, presents a side view of a rehearsal in which we see only the top half of a female singer, the rest of her hidden by the stage floor near the orchestra pit. Recalling the metaphors of "unearthing better material" in *The Patriot,* Kluge clearly wants to explore what is underneath the image, spectacle, and history (his story). The method recalls a remark by Brecht that Kluge is fond of quoting: "Less than ever does a simple 'reproduction of reality' tell us anything about reality. A photograph of the Krupp factory or of the AEG yields practically nothing about these institutions. . . . Hence something has to be 'constructed,' something 'artificial,' something not given but 'put together.' "[11]

The point is made repeatedly by the unusual camera positions and angles Kluge uses to present operatic productions and rehearsals. Ours is not a typical seat at the opera house. It is not the perspective of an audience member facing the stage, but rather is taken from behind the stage, where Kluge maintains the real labor is at work. His character, Ferdinand Reiche, the watchman of *Strongman Ferdinand,* is oblivious to that. He fails to be vigilant in the parts of the opera house where he might check for acoustics, for ways to change orchestral sound, or, Kluge argues, for hidden items that had previously escaped him.[12] It is precisely in letting his guard *down* that the guardsman becomes involved in what proves to be a calamitous confusion of reality and opera, even drawing his gun ("ever the policeman," Kluge quips)[13] as he watches Tosca kill Scarpia in a diegetic performance. Kluge's atypical camera placements here preclude the lethal identification Reiche experiences; our view is constantly being obstructed by ropes, wires, workers wandering in front of the camera—undisturbed viewing is, in a word, impossible. Through these viewing positions—literally getting behind the operatic facade—Kluge enjoins his audience to find the economic and power relations that may have "previously escaped us"; his emphasis on process, as Peter Lutze notes, "is a modernist alternative to the classical attempt to absorb the spectator into the diegetic world."[14] In this way, Kluge's film style presents Benjamin's concept of allegorical readings and his own belief in the forces that conventional public spheres leave untapped. In addition to providing us with unusual seats at the opera, Kluge insures that we arrive late or at the wrong time, denying us access to a stable position from which we might immerse ourselves in the proceedings. The same strategy orchestrates the frequent refusal of his soundtracks to match "correct" opera recordings to their accompanying images. When the fire marshal seeks Parsifal's grail in *The Power of Emotion,* for instance, we hear not Wagner, but Sibelius's *Four Legends.*

To further discourage audience members from fetishizing tragedy or romanticizing its deadly outcomes, Kluge's voice-over continually, almost happily, spoils the plot of well-known operas. When he tells us that "this child has just hours to live," he adheres to his own prescription to interrupt *Carmen* just as Don Jose is about to stab her, and demand "an immediate discussion."[15] Kluge's dry, laconic summaries cast off any auratic luster the operas might have, particularly in the section of *The Power of Emotion* labeled "The Plot." Here, in the wings of a performance of *Rigoletto,* a cast member whispers the tragic events that have befallen the dwarf, as if this were newly acquired, shocking gossip of a neighborhood friend. Kluge's use of reductive plot summaries boils operas down to their pseudotragic, violent cores: "*Aida* presents the story of two great peoples, the Ethiopians and the Egyptians, at war with one another for one hundred years. *[Pause]* Opera cannot report these bloody events directly. The catastrophe must be transformed into an almost-could-have-had a happy ending. So, the war between two nations is turned into a story of three people. . . . [But] because the opera is, in reality, about war, there can be no happy ending for the lovers in act 5."

After a brief intervention in which Frau Bärlaam, a fictional marriage broker, is introduced, *The Power of Emotion* returns to *Aida* and the fate of Aida and Radames. About this opera which is "really about war," his voice exclaims, "Oh, what opera conceals!" The tinted film version continues, and because it is depicted through iris mattes, we get a visual pun on the imprisonment going on in the narrative. The mattes disguise what Kluge considers the real goings-on behind the story's events and turns. Interestingly, the silent film alters the ending of Verdi's original opera by having the community free Aida and Radames from the tomb—a brief cinematic reprieve from opera's fatal conclusions—and then proceeds to stone them to death for the selfishness they display as lovers: "People don't stand for lovers being buried alive, and so they were freed at the last moment. But when it became clear that the lovers were only interested in themselves, the people were disappointed." Film intertitles of "Stone them!" appear, with added sounds of howling winds, which appear throughout *The Power of Emotion.* "And so, despite the intervention of the masses, act 5 has no happy end. . . . Operas are cruel by popular demand." That an alternative existed in this brief example—one enabled by collective effort, no less—only to be dashed immediately, shows the stranglehold cruelty has on opera and, as Kluge believes, upon its listeners as well.

In addition to being a story of war and of cruel mobs, *Aida* is a tale of ethnically and nationally proscribed sexual passion. That proscription exceeds the diegetic hostilities between Ethiopians and Egyptians; indeed it

would seem that in highlighting the tragic fate of Radames and Aida's love affair, Verdi had thrown out a colonialist bone to racial tolerance in his opera, which premiered in 1871. At the time, European musical culture was fully taken with Orientalism, projecting onto it middle- and upper-class fantasies of, among other things, unfettered nature, sensuality, primitivism, exoticism, mystery, threat, and savagery, "otherings" that helped reproduce the fantasmatic status quo of colonial Europe as well. This was the time of Europe's "race to colonize" Africa and the Middle East; colonialist expansionism was buoyed by the expansion of industrial capital, driven to perpetuate itself through added markets, workers, and consumers.

Where is music in all of this? Benjamin once quipped that operetta was "the ironic utopia of a lasting domination by Capital."[16] In addition to *Aida*, operas like *Samson and Dalila* and *Thais* fed into Europe's Orientalist fantasies at the same time as they "served to distract attention from the realities of Western exploitation of, and geopolitical scramble over, the Middle East," according to Ralph Locke.[17] *Aida*'s history, entwined with nationalist and colonialist imperatives, is instructive in this regard. A pre-Christian story set to music by an Italian Catholic composer, the opera premiered in Cairo on, of all days, Christmas Eve. The Egyptian government would even adopt "Gloria all'Egitto" as a national hymn. Not surprisingly, Verdi was at pains to exoticize his music, most notably with the unseen priestess of Phthà (through the interval of the lowered second and broken chords performed by harps), gridding exoticism with clichéd care even on an *invisible* female body. Moreover, Verdi instructed his librettist, Antonio Ghislanzoni, not to render Aida's decision to die with Radames as a death wish and to mute any references to their physical anguish in order to support the elegiac, ethereal music he would compose for the opera's end ("O terra, addio"). *The Power of Emotion*, by contrast, chooses to *exacerbate* the physically violent nature of their death (rocks, more rocks, entombment), mocking the transcendence with which the tale was produced and, presumably, consumed.

THE VALUE OF EMOTION

Operas are not only "cruel by popular demand," but, according to Kluge, are oblivious to simpler, less tragic feelings. We are told that "our emotions always want a happy ending," yet in the marketplace of emotion, "feelings in unhappy stories weigh more"—the trick is how to combine uplifting endings with unhappy stories. Rather than dealing with the grandiose

emotions of opera, Kluge prefers to activate the small, illogical, unprocessed feelings that are usually inaccessible to social institutions or even to the people themselves. This is exemplified by the rape victim who said she felt more victimized by the boyfriend who'd left her than by her rapist because, during the rape, still unconscious from an attempted suicide, she hadn't felt anything.

In addition to materializing the experiences of human bodies (Radames and Aida should be screaming in pain, not singing to one another), Kluge materializes human emotions. Among *The Power of Emotion*'s many, usually dry, examples is the courtroom scene mentioned earlier, "Das Schuss / The Shot," in which a woman is questioned for shooting her husband. The men assume that because she had just caught her husband and daughter having sex, she must have "blown a fuse," to which she responds, "My fuses were fine." Her questioners are baffled by the emotional impropriety of her response; they are equally intrigued by the gun she fired, inspecting it like fascinated young schoolboys.

This is how Kluge gives feelings objectified form, whether on the body ("my fuses were fine") or in terms of exchange value ("stories with sad endings are worth more"). It is worth stressing that this is not an example of postmodern wordplay, in spite of the director's frequent use of puns and ironies. (In interviews he distances himself from postmodernism, disinterested in what he considers its "disrespect" for materials.)[18] The materiality of bodies and emotions is based on a materialist perspective on history and on social analysis and change (see note 20, below), and Kluge is forever at pains to expose the structures and contradictions of power and economic forces. Thus, presenting bodies and emotions in "materialized" ways does not necessarily put materialism under erasure, as Teresa Ebert argues in her critique of what she calls ludic feminism, whose poststructuralist, postmodernist elaborations of materialized bodies actually occluded material conditions in favor of discourse.[19] So while the concrete presentation of emotions is never in question, Kluge stresses their circulation within systems of exchange governed by use value, labor value, and the vagaries of social and historical trends—a system, in short, regulated by human desires and needs, actual and manufactured. In other words, and so as not to confuse *material* with *materialist*,[20] he draws our attention to the fact that subjectivity is determined by human-generated (and thus changeable) systems of exchange. As *The Power of Emotion* makes clear, the irony of late capitalism is that it ignores human desires at the same time as it manipulates them.

In this vein, the power plant takes on another connotative layer. Unlike factories, which produce goods, power plants process natural elements, like

coal, water, and sun, into energy forms needed to sustain human life. Not incidentally, *The Power of Emotion* repeatedly draws our attention to natural energy sources, like wind, sun, and fire. In one of the film's few identified citations, Adam Smith is quoted: " 'Water is vital to all aspects of life. One cannot exist without it. Yet rarely can one use it for purposes of trade. A diamond, by contrast, has no intrinsic value but can be used in trade for all sorts of other commodities,' Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*." Unlike actual economists, though, Kluge adds human emotion into the mix. Officially unvalued, feelings, like water, are nonetheless essential for life. Updating his argument, one notes that despite their ongoing "inherent" worthlessness, the value of emotions has mushroomed since the release of this film, with pharmaceutical companies—the new power plants of emotions—cashing in on "unhappy feelings" with lucrative antidepressants and other psychotropics. Kluge positioned feelings in the operatic power plant in much the same way, that is, as both raw material and byproduct.

Whatever authenticity Kluge may implicitly give these "raw materials," he is de-idealizing them as he materializes emotions and the bodies that contain them. He pushes that de-idealization further by associating emotions with destruction, tragedy, death, and even war. To be sure, most of the operas whose plot lines he dryly recounts do not end happily. Thus, for as much as *The Power of Emotion* examines and even champions the raw "power of emotions" ("suddenly and brutally, they explode"), it shows how their institutionalization and "overprocessing" reduces them to a single tragic group whose power comes from being wielded over us, not derived from us.

Curiously, for all of its interest in emotion, critics have attacked *The Power of Emotion* for its absence of passion and feeling. The charge, I believe, is really an observation about the absence of *sentimentalism* in the film, something especially evident in Kluge's acerbic treatment of romantic love. For what films like *Power of Emotion* do is stress the inadequacy of conventional narrative formats to human emotions. Heterosexual romance cannot end wars, nor even suspend them, and nonheterosexual romances are off the map entirely. Kluge is not interested in passion per se, but he is concerned with how obdurate our emotions can be when pitted against structures that do not account for them. Consequently, he explores their ability to operate outside of these predetermined forms. The feelings to which he turns are not those that find themselves readily sung, marketed, or narrativized, and so in that regard may be difficult to locate in this particular film.

Outside of opera's institutional context, emotions work differently. They don't occur one at a time, for instance, as marriage broker Frau Bär-

laam explains. She is "someone who establishes bonds, a knot-maker," as Kluge's voice-over states: "Frau Bärlaam believes that everyone has emotions. If everyone had just one, the knots would hold better." He uses Betty, the prostitute, to illustrate the simultaneous, contradictory nature of emotional experience. Again, Kluge, practically whispering: "Betty's professional secrets: 1) tenderness; 2) know-how; 3) no special feeling. A lot of feeling is required to combine all three." Human emotions need constant management. Managing them is profitable for the opera house, for Betty, and for the marriage broker. As director and intrusive narrator, Kluge himself is also "managing" our approach to emotions, in addition to those of his characters.

The characters of *The Power of Emotion* dramatize how much love, sex, and feelings are determined by use and exchange value: emotions are bound up with all sorts of contracts. Just as emotions are commodified and take their proper place within generic contracts (film, history, opera), love and sex function within strict contracts and prearranged desires, as with the prenuptial agreement popular among wealthy couples today (another contract that banks on an "unhappy outcome"). In a very Fassbinderian detail, an intertitle towards the end of *The Power of Emotion* asks, "What is stronger than a marriage? A murder, when both know what the other has done."

Kluge portrays the quantifiable nature of love in a two shot of a couple talking (later they will be revealed as the murderers mentioned above):

HE: Are you saying you don't love me?

SHE: How much do you love me?

SHE: How much *should* I love you?

HE: Exactly as much as I love you. . . .

SHE: Not more?

HE: No more, no less.

SHE: And if I loved you less, then what?

HE: Then you would owe me change.

Immediately after this exchange, the film cuts to the marriage broker, who comments that "No one ever has the right change." Betty is introduced with the line "Love for sale," and when she is bought by the pimp Schleich, Kluge tells us she is pleased for "having been purchased for her own sake" for the first time, literalizing the exchange value of emotions in yet another pun. What might be called here the "measurement of emotions" upholds the director's penchant for lists and absurd enumerations, such as the number of times an opera is performed with the same tragic ending, the

number of wars experienced in a three-hundred-year-old life. He reveals the arbitrary, even aleatory nature of these figures by scattering glimpses of pimps, fortunetellers, and gamblers over the course of the film.

THE DIFFERENCE OF EMOTION

"Objects are the opposite of emotions," we are told in a scene that closes on an extreme close-up of a wound near a young woman's eye, clearly the result of abuse. Kluge's voice-over says, "Pain is personal property. Too much suffering turns you into an object." The facial injury of this unnamed woman offers the most direct visual representation of a wound in *The Power of Emotion*. In contrast to Corporal Wieland's in *The Patriot*, this bearer remains conspicuously silent.

Elsewhere in the film, the section "The Confusion of Emotions" features *extensive* discussions on wounds and injury. The most significant takes place between an official and a Teichert-like character, played by Kluge's sister Alexandra Kluge, who wants to learn the fate of a German woman who had tied sheets together as a flag of surrender during a bomb raid in the war. That woman's effort, like Gerta's, proved fruitless. After a short, insensitive discourse on how to "get a good fire going" that will "tear out the guts of a building," the official quotes his brother, an air force doctor, who says the aftermath of a fire is like "treating an extensive wound. You can't get at it by treating the scab. A historically scabbed city works the same way—the wound must be reopened and cleaned before it can heal properly." In typical contradictory fashion, Kluge voices what in the 1970s and early 1980s would have been a sympathetic attitude towards German historical experience through a very unsympathetic character. The woman persists with her questions about the woman with the sheets, a story that clearly does not interest the man, and when he asks her directly if his condolences would help, she answers in the negative. Some stylistic choices literalize the official's highly military view of things. Inserted footage from a U-boat film gives the view from a periscope, the deadliness of which is acknowledged in the next text fragment. Ever concerned with time and the false assurance of statistics, the voice-over tells us: "It is 4 A.M. Most people die at this hour." Then, as if reprising Wieland's knee, "But the dead are not resting in peace. They are restless, uncertain whether things will proceed justly when they arise from their graves." In a surprisingly poignant image (through a green tint and iris matte) we see the face of a woman with a look of extraordinary affection. Is she a lover? A writer? Quickly, we enter the icy grotto of an unidentified opera, then to footage of fires blasting open

what appear to be coffins. After returning to the Frankfurt skyline, replete with Wagner, the dialogue returns: "If those who suffered the worst wounds because of this showed up too late at the last judgment, only to find the worst injustice, that the proceedings are over, then such final injustice would be reason enough for graves to open now." The choice of music is crucial: Mahler's Symphony No. 2, the Resurrection Symphony. Kluge gives powerful illustration to the fact that for him the wounded, the buried, and the forgotten constitute the literal "force" for change, much as he had argued in his work with Negt.

THE UNDOING OF ACT 5

> We might as well let ourselves have some fun with [this limited opera house repertoire]. If we can't replace it overnight—and don't necessarily want to part from part of it—we can play with it by giving the canonical works various new contexts.
>
> —RALPH LOCKE

The film's final and lengthiest segment, "The Undoing of a Crime through Mutual Cooperation," overturns the fatal undoings of all of these operatic final acts, and does so with enough irony and artifice as to also mock what Sirk called the "emergency exits" of Hollywood's happy endings. A Yugoslav hotel manager, Ante Allewisch, comes to West Germany to exchange some diamonds for money so that he can purchase a washing machine in Brussels. Four locals are involved, all of them from unofficial economic counterspheres: Schleich, a "burglary specialist" with an expertise in furs; Betty, the prostitute he has purchased; Manfred Schmidt, a man who "lives off of his secretary," Mäxchen Bärbel, with whom he is romantically (or at least sexually) involved. Schmidt and Mäxchen go to their arranged rendezvous with Allewisch, where Schmidt suddenly and brutally hits him on the head with a heavy tool. Though shocked, Mäxchen flees to Barcelona with him, leaving the foreigner for dead. Unable to escape or "undo" their crime, they are last shown scrapping in the small, dingy room that is their hideout. Kluge ironically tells us that "Mäxchen's dreams have come true—she and Manfred are living together, in inescapable confines of four square meters."

The *real* happy ending of Kluge's alternative "drama of inescapable tragedy" pertains to "the undoing of a crime through mutual cooperation." It begins the moment when Betty and Schleich discover that the man their colleagues left for dead has not actually died. Here Kluge begins to swerve away from the near-certain fatality of opera's denouements—a fatality

caused by a romantic heterosexual couple (which usually saves the day and concludes other narrative forms). Stressing the importance of that undoing, the sequence offers tips and suggestions as it goes along: "Never believe in a murder," we are told. As if heeding that advice, the two characters use primitive means to check for signs of life in the bleeding body—a lit candle to check his eyes; a pocket mirror for breath. The wounded man is bundled up and brought to a remote shack in the woods where the two nurse him back to consciousness by reading to him from stock reports, poetry, anything, sometimes several things at once, in order "to keep his damaged brain alive." The loud chirping of birds adds to the Rousseauian quality of the sequence, and appropriately, the character faces outdoors when his eyes first open, as if nature kitschily inspired his rebirth.

Allewisch's murder has thus been undone through what the film calls "six weeks of hard work, unpaid." Here is Kluge's clearest cinematic elaboration of the feminine labor force that he and Negt advocate in their social theory, and it is evident how deeply the film esteems this clandestine, nurturing labor.[21] Physically set off from the city in an ill-defined, nonindustrial setting, the couple's work bypasses the profit-seeking circuitry of typical economic contracts. In fact, their labor produces its own surplus value, giving the couple more emotional intimacy. As the voice-over tells us at the end of the film, they two are "closer now," a tentatively happy conclusion stylistically enforced when the film cuts from a kitschy full moon to a shot of the couple embracing in a car. Afterward, they stare with a puzzled look through the windshield directly into the camera in a relatively long take. Their look seems directed at the director, as if to ask, what now? His closing words describe not only their future, but what might be our potential as critical viewers: "Their technique," he says, "will improve over time."

This final sequence certainly offers a way to make your own "undead man," as the voice-over refers to Allewisch at one point. Being transported in a coffin-like trunk—recalling the coffins that had defiantly blazed open earlier in the film—intensifies the vampiristic aspects of his "half-death." Allewisch's return to life, however, is appreciably less flamboyant than that. Kluge uses the modest tale in order to demonstrate that opera's tragic endings are neither inevitable nor inescapable; by extrapolation, change is possible through small acts well beyond the purview of commercial opera and film. Do not content yourself with historical "outcomes," their explanations, their logic, or their goals. Do not believe in fate; you can change act 5.

Given the director's observation that "in all operas that deal with redemption, a woman is sacrificed in act 5," Kluge's decision to resurrect a male black market dealer from Yugoslavia is intriguing, to say the least. Yet the choice is more complex than at first blush. For the terms by which he

proceeds are motivated as much by national, economic, and ethnic differences as by gendered ones. Allewisch ventures into Germany with diamonds, arriving, as Adam Smith reminds us, with intrinsically worthless goods, whose value is established only by circulating within a specific economy. The figure thus enters into that economy from the "outside" as a Yugoslav going into the West German black market—capitalism's shadow, another kind of counter-economy. Like Parsifal, who stumbles upon Monsalvat unaware of the significance either of his killing a swan or of the grail, Allewisch might be another "innocent fool." But the hotel manager from the East enters the golden kingdom (recall the gilded buildings of Frankfurt's financial center) *well aware* of the worth of his goods and of the system into which he is moving. Wagner's knights were unable to save their king precisely for being *within* the same economy and sharing the same understanding of the value of the grail; thus only an outsider can redeem Amfortas, someone who through recognition and empathy enters their system.[22] There are other similarities between Wagner's and Kluge's texts. Men in both texts, in a sense, come to. As king, Parsifal is now aware of the weight of his office and the significance of the grail and its economy;[23] Kluge's character comes to in a more literal sense, returning to consciousness and starting to learn all over again like a child. He will need to learn differently this time, intimating the alternative political, social, epistemological, and emotional economy Kluge tried to theorize.

Given the historical context in which *The Power of Emotion* was made, the figure entering capitalist West Germany from Yugoslavia would certainly have been seen as someone from a different economic system. And given Kluge's theoretical perspective at the time, he would probably feminize that economy along with Allewisch's status in the west. For these reasons I find it impossible to conceptualize this redeemed figure as simply or unambiguously male, a criticism that someone like Clément might have made. Even when we compare Allewisch to figures in Wagner's opera, his affinities are surprisingly mobile. He is at once Parsifal, the innocent fool (who is himself ambiguously gendered), and the wounded Amfortas, who is healed, not by the sword (or black marketer) that struck him, but by the hands of collaborators—suggesting an empathetic or even homeopathic recovery. Allewisch is also like Kundry, the ethnic other (Wagner's libretto contains several references to the black-haired woman's Arab background) condemned to wander the earth. Indeed, since the premiere of *Parsifal*, critics have noted that Kundry is a flagrant representation of the wandering Jew (a racist depiction abetted by the Wagnerian economy behind it): dark and homeless, she is both castrated and castrating, luring productive, Christian men from their responsibilities and their proper symbolic roles.[24]

What makes *Parsifal* so interesting is how it distributes a variety of problematic tropes of "Jewishness" onto a wide array of figures. Circumcision becomes castration and is carved onto the wounded thigh of King Amfortas, who refuses his office out of guilt but also, as Linda and Michael Hutcheon argue, from the disabling physical pain of syphilis—a disease stereotypically perceived as afflicting sexual "wanderers" and what the Nazis would come to identify as the *Judenpest.* Clichéd tropes of Semitism also inscribe the body of Klingsor, who also castrates himself after his encounter with Kundry. Associated with Jewishness by dint of anatomical castration as well as sexual contamination, these figures demonstrate how otherness, and the undesirable features projected onto it, can be located on the very same body-egos that would cast it out. Kundry's death in the story is not incidental. Feminine, sexual, and tainted, she, along with Klingsor, is the most conspicuously anti-Christian, wandering outside of the kingdom of the Christian grail, which accepts her only when she has ceased to exist. This is not altogether unlike the Nazi plans for establishing a "Jewish museum" in Prague, after they had exterminated all Jewish people.

Wagner's is not the only *Parsifal* important to *The Power of Emotion.* Kluge's film includes a clip from a rehearsal of Syberberg's filmed version of the opera (1982). It appears in a section entitled "The State," where the collusion of musical, religious, and political institutions is explicitly named; the guards are rehearsing the Communion scene. Here Kluge gives an appreciative wink to his colleague's earlier work. He also shares Syberberg's interest in fragmentation. Syberberg's film disunifies bodies by removing Amfortas's wound from its male German body and displaying it, in all its vulvular glory, on a pillow-shrine; he has nonsinging actors lip-synch to prerecorded music; a young man portrays Parsifal until his transformative kiss with Kundry, after which he is portrayed by a woman. At that point in the text, as Syberberg shows, much more than sexual renunciation and gender are at stake. He writes, "Wagner assimilates the problem of woman as a figure of guilt and hostility with that of the Wandering Jew, treating them as stages in a process of seductive temptation and eternal malediction."[25]

Despite Syberberg's interest in splintering and fragmentation, he performs Wagner's opera in its entirety and in sequence. His disruptions are thus thematic and visual, as in the cluttered opening set, the disembodied wound, the sex change, and so on. Were these details less critically trenchant, the uninterrupted music might have assumed the same transcendent reverence as Beethoven's had in *Our Hitler.* Yet given how much Syberberg draws our attention to *Parsifal*'s anti-Semitism, its skittish depiction of heterosexuality, and Christianity's renunciations, it would be difficult to

sustain such an interpretation. If German music were that sacred, its stagy "performance" in Syberberg's film would not be so much in evidence.

I believe that Kluge selected *Parsifal* as the tutor-text for his film because it operates both within and beyond the transcendent, tragic mode he wants to challenge. He clearly appropriates its thematics of faith, conveying them musically through the opera's Prelude and the Communion scene. "[Wagner's] opera," Nietzsche puts bluntly, "is the opera of redemption."[26] Secularizing Wagner's Easter tale, Kluge shows how opera may be deployed to ironic, critical ends: he exposes contemporary capital's quest for the hollow, glittering grail, the artifice and allure of happy or "redemptive" endings, and so forth. Borrowing *Parsifal*'s structure, *The Power of Emotion* opens with its Prelude and uses its thematics of faith and redemption in the final redemptive story. Yet it also withholds all dematerializing transcendence from Wagner's text.

I also believe Kluge selects *Parsifal* for another reason: as a source of beautiful, tainted pleasures. Several ominous details and a moment of exquisite beauty haunt the end of *The Power of Emotion.* Before the attack on Allewisch, we see a couple of men peacefully painting a building in a rather unextraordinary sequence of shots. It is springtime; there are buds on trees, birds singing—an indisputable gentleness marks this narratively insignificant setting. The nondiegetic music is not meant to jar; indeed, it is beautifully played. But it is Haydn's "Emperor's Hymn," the piece that tracks Kluge's work like a dog. However quietly or beautifully performed, the piece still connotes militarism, war, German nationalism, and Nazism. The piece appears later when Allewisch is deemed sufficiently recovered to be transported, and Betty and her partner place the brain-damaged man in the car trunk, cover him with furs, and drive "across three borders." Border officials stop them at one point, where a guard is oddly fascinated by Betty's tube of blood-colored lipstick, a visual detail in keeping with the fiery emotions and bloody stories that saturate the film. In light of the previous appearance of the Haydn—in which Hitler may be indirectly mocked through the housepainters, banal descendants of the Reich's *artiste manqué*—the Kaiserhymn assumes extra political reference in this latter scene. Given that an entire World War is gridded onto this musical piece, it is hard not to recall the nationalist assassination in Sarajevo that helped trigger the *First* World War as the Kaiserhymn accompanies the Yugoslav across borders around Germany. As we had noted with the stunning beauty of the Frankfurt skyline scored with *Parsifal* at the film's beginning, musical beauty coexists here with trenchant critique, just as Peer Raben had advocated. And Kluge is not one to make beautiful or happy endings naive. They are only beginnings, and beginnings, as the music tells us, can go bad.

POSTLUDE: KLUGE'S ACT OF KINDNESS

Had it not been for interventions like Kluge's in the 1970s and early 1980s, critical music studies of opera would not be where they are today. At the time, cultural critics were beginning to challenge opera's deadly grip on female characters. Feminist studies like Clément's *Opera, or the Undoing of Women* and Sally Potter's *Thriller,* a cinematic inquiry into Mimi's death in *La Bohème,* were both released in 1979, just four years before *The Power of Emotion. The Power of Emotion* practically quotes Clément's study, which states that women in opera "perpetually sing their eternal undoing."[27] These witheringly dry plot synopses—like Kluge's—also appear in Potter's *Thriller,* whose narrator streamlines *La Bohème*'s first act while a series of still images and musical passages from the opera appears: "Four male artists . . . are in an attic studio, fighting the cold, fooling around. Three of them go out to a café, leaving Rodolfo alone. There is a knock at the door. It is Mimi, a seamstress and flower-maker whose candle has gone out on the way up to her room. She comes in. They fall in love. . . ." Near the end, when an ailing Mimi is brought to the attic of the men, the narrator notes that "they do what they can for her, but she dies." After relating the plot she asks, "Can these be the facts? Is that what really happened?"

All three of these critical exposés of opera's deadly deeds focus almost exclusively on plot. Like her colleagues, Clément reduced the story lines of any number of operas to their barest narrative structures in order to highlight the repetitiveness of the formula. Nonetheless, when it was released, her book drew charges for its exclusive focus on libretti, much as Jutta Brückner criticized *The Power of Emotion* for failing to consider sensually affirming, *non*-narrative elements. To be sure, the entirety of Kluge's film acknowledges the power of music and spectacle, but the references are handled in displaced and highly critical ways. As Peter Lutze notes, the film actually demonstrates the force of music through its structure. With its fragmented, elliptical appearances, music is what ties the scattered stories of *The Power of Emotion* together.

Critics might also question Kluge's selection of operatic texts. By choosing only those with "deadly outcomes" and examining only the deleterious aspects of our responses to them, Kluge stacks the deck considerably. That preoccupation obliges him to find deadliness and inescapable fates everywhere, and so he boils down the range of operatic repertoire and listening experiences into one monolithic phenomenon. It is small wonder, then, that he feels impelled to articulate his "disbelief in the tragic and the melancholic with which our culture today seems infatuated."[28] To be sure,

there were polemical reasons for him to make the choices he did. To present opera as a mass-produced product of the "power plant of emotions," it would be unreasonable to expect much in the way of product differentiation, just as Clément's synopses worked to establish opera's repetitive misogynist patterns.

In response to Clément's claim that nineteenth-century opera reveals a "great masculine scheme . . . thought up to adore, and also to kill, the feminine character,"[29] Ralph Locke asks, what about comic opera, where social mores may be sent up even if they are reinstated, or "*serious* works whose heroines strive rather than wilt?" What about the women in Handel's *Aleina*, and other earlier operas by Handel, he asks, or the Walkyries, or the various Joan of Arcs? What about the female *performers* who were taking over the roles of the castrati by the late eighteenth century?[30] What, for that matter, about masculinity and death? As Linda and Michael Hutcheon argue, "For every Senta who leaps to her death . . . there is a Peter Grimes who rows out to sea to die."[31] Kluge's resurrection of Allewisch demonstrates that opera's murders—done or "undone"—are as contingent on political, ethnic, and economic difference as they are on gender. Thus it would be misguided to dismiss Kluge or Clément for focussing so much on plots, or for their dated, binarist views of gender. These ideas established the contours for new lines of inquiry into opera, power, and identity. Perhaps we are only flattering ourselves in believing that "our technique has improved [so much] with time."

Like *The Power of Emotion*, contemporary opera studies devote considerable energy to the material components of opera, especially the bodies that sing and listen. It is not an unwarranted emphasis. With the intense physicality of its vocal production, along with the emotions and identifications it elicits from listeners, operatic music has strong connections to the human body. That relationship is played out onstage when we see bodies perform what texts "impose" upon them: pulmonary diseases (*La Bohème*), punishment for intercaste relationships or other sexual "transgressions" (*Aida*, *Carmen*, and others). Not incidentally, today's focus on bodies comes from music scholars interested in postcolonial, race, and ethnicity studies and in lesbian, gay, and queer scholarship—areas concerned with the ways in which bodies are differentiated through historically contingent power relations.

It could be argued that a two-sided relationship exists between Kluge and contemporary lesbian, gay, and queer theorists. Both sides are aware of the physical and cultural stakes in operatic representation, yet contemporary queer scholarship presents more alternatives to be considered and explored. And if Kluge materialized opera in order to de-idealize it and extin-

guish its auratic pull over us, lesbian and gay theorists argue that opera's "pull" lies *in* its physicality, its extravagant style, its diva cults, and its physical vocal performance. Queer theorists stress how opera can stage socially discouraged desires, providing a focal point for the construction of queer identities. For Wayne Koestenbaum, what he calls the "unnatural" character of the trained operatic voice finds equivalencies in proscribed gay male desire; for Samuel Abel, "I came to opera because I found there a different kind of sexuality, a public performance that offered to me the same attractions that I would later find in person-to-person sexual relations."[32] Lesbian musicologists have observed that divas provide sites of extravagant *identification*—as bodies in excess, capable of intense vocal expression and passion, and as social outcasts—as well as objects of *desire* for women.[33]

A self-conscious, performative art, opera does more than what film scholars have called "baring the apparatus": to Kluge opera *is* the apparatus. Opera unquestionably complicates how cinema scholars have theorized identification, for instance. Its characters are saddled with unendurably intense emotions, and these feelings are depicted in ways that suggest their direct presentation, rather than a credible *re*presentation. Consequently, and not unlike many films of the New German Cinema, these powerful emotions seem only incidentally tied to character psyches and give rise to a more generalized/generic sense of longing, heartbreak, regret, or joy, one I believe listeners can access or adapt, depending on the historical, cultural, social, and other circumstances of their reception. Because listeners can be gripped with passions that exceed individualized sources, opera allows them/us to appreciate its shifting social and interpretative contexts—recall Kluge's summary of *Aida* as a love story that "in reality, is about war." Opera thus frustrates the simple emotional attachments often associated with character-dominated narrative forms and one-to-one identifications. Of course, opera has historically been aligned with socio-economically privileged audiences. But that, I believe, can serve to heighten the furtive pleasures that lesbians, gays, and "others" derive from it, especially now, when it enjoys less cultural hegemony than when the "power plant of emotions," according to Kluge, governed feelings in the West.

In his exemplary recent study of Kluge, Peter Lutze comments on the director's passion for tragic operas, noting that while they trouble Kluge, they enrapture him nonetheless. What else explains the multiple viewings of *Carmen?* As I noted above, that rapture is precisely what opera scholars are mining for new interpretations since the release of *The Power of Emotion.* Their work in this regard recalls the process Susan Buck-Morss de-

scribed in relation to Benjamin's *Passagenwerk*. "For the proletariat," she writes, "the discarded material of nineteenth-century culture [e.g., opera] symbolized a life that was still unattainable; for the bourgeois intellectual, it represented the loss of what once was."[34] For Benjamin and Kluge, opera symbolized a colonialist, capitalist culture enthralled with its own power. To many of us today, it may also reveal the frayed addiction of that culture to heterosexual mores, or, quite by contrast, the release of normally suppressed emotions and memories, both of those things, or something else altogether. Even Weill and Brecht did not discount the power of emotion, despite what film critics wrote about the concept of *Verfremdungseffekt* in the 1970s and 1980s. Epic theatre operas like *Mahogonny* or *Happy End* were designed to mobilize the emotions of auditors to anger, to action, and to sympathize with figures whose familiar plights were as perceptibly unjust as their remedies unwise.

At once emotional and intellectual, intense but incomplete, identification in opera is a complex and fascinating beast. It can be engaged by figures, situations, or the "not-yet-heards" of missing scenarios past and present. Its long tradition of blurred performance and vocal categories further complicates any facile one-to-one correspondences of listener and character. Its stories are often based on mistaken identity across class, caste, and gendered lines. Until relatively recently, men performed female roles and women performed male ones, especially as boys. How can stable gender functions be ascribed to these fictional figures, or to performers like the castrati or countertenors? How can we reread tragic operas; what forms might counter- or dis-identifications take? It seems clear in the end that identification is less fixed and fatal than Kluge would have us believe in *The Power of Emotion*, which somehow presumes audiences buy into the greater worth of sadness over happiness, the belief that selfish lovers must be punished, and so forth. *Strongman Ferdinand* shows an even more perfunctory response when Reich, the guardsman, identifies with *Tosca*'s Scarpia. Reich is one of Kluge's most exaggerated tragic-comic figures, and audience members are not likely to forge the identifications with him that Kluge takes for granted even while ridiculing them. Do men always identify with *Carmen*'s Don Jose? Is he really such an enviable, powerful, or tragic figure? Does everyone share his murderous/amorous impulses towards Carmen?

In the last chapter, I mentioned Helke Sander's reference to Kluge's "anti-drama" as a "form of kindness." It appears in an essay that recounts how the two became friends after her critique of *The Occasional Work of a Female Slave* was published. She openly admits being taken in by his "charm, his intelligence . . . his wit . . . his ability to correlate unusual

facts . . . and by his generosity."[35] Nonetheless, Sander's basic opposition to what she calls Kluge's "patriarchal viewpoint" remained unchanged. His view was so different from her own, she argued, that the two ended up like a pair of his characters in one of his circular question-and-answer scenes, two irreconcilable systems of logic placed face to face.

I find myself in a similar position, without the benefit of having met Kluge the personality. His films—and especially *The Power of Emotion* and *The Patriot*—have never failed to move me. When I began writing these chapters, the last thing I expected was to be picking through their limitations, since many of my concerns had been raised by critics like Kaes, Rich, and Sander before me. The criticisms raised here stand as byproducts of my own encounters with the films, a form of the "unwanted within the wanted." For ultimately, I believe that Kluge's *texts* boast the same features Sander attributes to Kluge *personally*—openness, originality, generosity, and wit. To me, they constitute his ultimate "kindness," an intelligent open-heartedness that encourages viewers and listeners to form thoughts, feelings, and conclusions independent of the director's. As the couple in the last sequence of *The Power of Emotion* shows, murderous endings can be defused; alterity is easy to embrace. Their life-saving act points, moreover, to a lambent psychic and emotional economy in which compassion and empathy may have the power to change the course of events or the telling of history. The stares of the two characters into the camera compel us to do the same kind of work. In the end, *The Power of Emotion* extends to others a form of critical introjection, a welcome gesture after *The Patriot*.

Thus what we might initially read as problems, blind spots, or openly provocative contradictions in Kluge's choices might be considered the "gifts" Sander describes, which are left for us to rework. For instance, without declaring it overtly, *The Power of Emotion* shows that no matter how manipulated they are, emotions—like music—are a source of great pleasure, and that pleasure needn't be divorced from insight or critique. (One can only imagine how Peer Raben would enjoy the film's opening segment.) The porousness of the film creates the potential for listeners to take up the challenge of change. By concretizing "the power of emotions," Kluge's film carves out more space for emotion and desire and assumes a wider, more differentiated sense of audience and nation than did *The Patriot*.

Thus, if tragic opera theatricalizes the internalized *Zusammenhänge* western viewers bring to texts, *The Power of Emotion* shows how easily they can be blasted open. The modest "imaginary opera"[36] that concludes *The Power of Emotion* offers one such rescripting. As Susan Leonardi and Rebecca Pope have suggested, "[T]he ending that kills the Other, though

powerfully privileged and overdetermined, is not the only place of identification. . . . [I]t cannot shut down the possibility of fantasized alternatives."[37] That place of fantasy is crucial to the theatrical, playful stagings of camp and kitsch, which, as I argue in the next chapter, do not necessarily leave the realm of politics—or pleasure—behind.

PART III

Queering History Through Camp and Kitsch

5 Restaging History with Fantasy

Body, Camp, and Sound in the Films of Treut, Ottinger, and von Praunheim

> Camp is a form of historicism viewed histrionically.
>
> —PHILIP CORE

Known for staging socio-historical, political and psychical issues, the New German Cinema used different musical and stylistic techniques to construct bodies as prop-laden figures rather than as psychologically credible beings. But, as we have seen, the history lessons enacted through (or upon) the bodies of Gerta Baethe and others leave certain questions unanswered, even unposed. How are bodies differentiated? What about the identifications, agency, pleasure, and desires of filmgoers? Turning to the work of Monika Treut, Ulrike Ottinger, and Rosa von Praunheim, I want to show how music, sound, and style can counter their often fatalistic depictions in other films of the movement. How, these filmmakers seem to ask, do music and style point to pleasure, fantasy, and subjectivity, and how do they intersect with history? Camp and kitsch (and music, which is not commonly associated with either) respond to these kinds of questions, exploring the differences within postwar identities in Germany and abroad.

CAMP: DENATURALIZATION, EXPOSÉ, AND TRASH

Critics have spilled considerable ink trying to establish a definition of camp. Despite dissenting interpretations, some consensus exists around the idea that camp denaturalizes objects and ideas through a playful reworking of codes, conventions, and surfaces. Camp deliberately mismatches texts and

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contexts to send them up and exaggerate them. Although this leads many critics to align camp with postmodernism, its foundations appeared well before the advent of postmodern—or even gay, lesbian, or queer—criticism. It emerged as a western phenomenon made possible through modernization, the expansion of capital, and the rise in leisure time. Consolidated in fin-de-siècle European figures like Wilde, Huysmans, and other Decadents, camp was taken up in gay and lesbian urban cultures for valuing artifice over "truth" or nature, surface over substance, pleasure over edifying mission. Disinterested in any modernist ethos that would esteem function over flourish, it embraced ornament and counterproductivity, neither lamenting nor championing industrial rationalization. Its sexual dynamics dismissed procreativity, posing a challenge to heterosexuality's imperatives to (re)produce. All of this occurred at a delicate historical juncture, one marked by the decline of empire, the consolidation of the middle class and consumerism, and the growing regulation of social, sexual, and familial identities through social and technological practices. Fin-de-siècle Europe followed on the heels of the era that fascinated Kluge, one which was also marked by consumer accumulation and the regulation of leisure time, desires, and "raw emotion."

Critics today aver that camp exposes objects, tastes, desires, or ideas that are normally not overtly presented. That invisibility/inaudibility might be due to cultural obsolescence (facial make-up according to old glamour codes), clichéd status (the monocles and scarred visage of Nazi officers), or social proscription (Lord Alfred Douglas's immortal reference to "the love that dare not speak its name"). Reading in codes, using artifice to detour normalizing codes of hegemonic culture, camp rerigs texts and contexts to bring to light unsanctioned meanings, identities, and assumptions that in other contexts might be hidden.[1] It shows that there is always another side, another story, and is thus of importance to historical thought. Understood this way, camp recalls Benjamin's allegorical readings, and it seems significant that both place considerable emphasis on the actual material of signs, be they props, like von Kant's wigs, or historical ruins, like a soldier's knee.

Camp adores cliché, surface, image. With its emphasis on texture and appearance, it presents a challenge to depth models of textuality, going against, for instance, structuralism's maxim that meaning is embedded within the deep structures of a text or psychoanalysis's search for original traumas. In the same vein, it undoes models of identity that have external signs of one's appearance "expressing" inner truths, a stable, "real" self. As Susan Sontag wrote, "Camp art is often decorative art, emphasizing texture, sensuous surface, and style at the expense of content."[2] Camp's fascination with signifiers and surface refuses the idea of immanence, which ac-

counts for its appeal to feminists, anti-essentialists, and queer theorists. Its disinterest in depth models recalls its flamboyant cousin, melodrama, even if its capacity for pleasure and humor is greater. For camp takes *delight* in artifice and surface, knowing that its objects do not point to anything retrievable, or even available, but investing attachments to them all the same. As we saw with *Satan's Brew* (see Chapter One), surfaces are pivotal to the role-playing of characters in the New German Cinema. That artifice already operating in the movement at large becomes even more elaborate in the group that I will be calling its "prequeer" films.

The understanding of camp as a scavenger or gleaner of surfaces is widespread. In the late 1980s, Andrew Ross influentially maintained that in seizing upon signs of "power . . . in decline,"[3] camp could articulate lost or neglected desires. He argued that it was the "eclipsed capacity" of artifacts, ideals, and conventions of "a much earlier mode of production" that "become available, in the present, for redefinition according to contemporary codes of taste."[4] Teasing out the historical implications of Ross's assessment, Pamela Robertson writes, "Whereas postmodern pastiche may privilege heterogeneity and random difference, camp is productively anachronistic and critically renders specific historical norms obsolete."[5]

Camp's recycling centers may recall Kluge's *Trümmelarchäologie.* These strategies actually treat the question of past and present identities quite differently, however. In camp, trash signifies more than just the remains of yesterday, more than history's spoils or signs of conquest, *pace* Kluge and Benjamin. To be sure, both the New German Cinema and its queerer, campier subset of films seize upon these kinds of discarded objects. But camp places debris, including human remains, onto enticing, fantastic stages. Moreover, the links it makes to the past are less concerned with putting these objects in the service of mourning *work* than with melancholic *play. Our Hitler,* for instance, is a text stuffed with visual and acoustic clutter, as if desperate to fill a vacuum. Obsessed with loss and the perceived damage done to German culture and society by Hitler, it departs from a queer notion of camp in which neither objects nor their lost power is mourned, even if they are acknowledged.

Ross's notion of camp as a scrounger of cultural debris has not met with universal acceptance. Because trash raises the question of *whose* trash it is and who has to pick it up, queer critics have challenged the implication that camp is supposed to react to heterosexual precepts and artifacts. Why should gay and lesbian cultures be seen as responding second-hand to purportedly original, defining contexts of heterosexuality? Moe Meyer, for instance, not only rejects the understanding of camp as a defensive reaction, but goes so far to argue that it *only* exists within nonheterosexual spheres.

Gay, feminist, and lesbian camp practices do their own recycling, Meyer maintains, highlighting the like-minded relationships between queer texts and their readers, not their dissimilarity. Camp, in other words, produces *queer* readings, as in icons like Marlene Dietrich and Zarah Leander, instead of reworking the discarded interpretation of straights.[6] The historical implications of that notion widen the question of "the" German past to include the submerged histories of gays, lesbians, and other disenfranchised groups.

Another issue Ross's work raises concerns camp's relationship to *contemporaneous* readings of its various excesses. What to make of the bawdy Wilhelmian and Weimar cabaret cultures, which were campy in their own time? Why must camp "wait" in order to be meaningful? That view presumes that camp cannot be knowing; it must be unintended or naïve, something to be corrected (or even invented) later. Upholding a linear view of history, it gives historical audiences and consumers short shrift, assuming that they only become sophisticated with time. To Wayne Koestenbaum, Ross unintentionally "trashes" gay culture by aligning camp with tossed-out artifacts of past lowbrow cultures. To be sure, Ross's work downplays highbrow camp forms, like opera, the focus of Koestenbaum's study (and opera has been a staple in gay and lesbian camp repertoires for years). But as Koestenbaum's objection to cheapened culture illustrates, camp's delight in *surfaces* is rather easily conflated with *superficiality,* its interest in outmoded objects but a sign of its own worthlessness or failure. Still, in contrast to Koestenbaum, most queer critics maintain that camp is supremely aware of this "failure" and requires or even celebrates it. (Kitsch, by contrast, is assumed to be oblivious to its own worthlessness and hence all the more abject, a point I refute in the next chapter.)

Deliberately "trashy" bad taste is an important component of the aesthetic strategies of lesbian, gay, and queer directors who worked alongside and after the New German Cinema. In a sense, it is a contemporary version of modernist shock, both out to affront through distaste and provocation, something that Frank Ripploh's 1981 hit *Taxi zum Klo* / *Taxi to the W.C.* conveys just through its title. But garbage involves more than debris, because it establishes that which is expelled from the public body as useless—the abject, nonproductive elements needed to uphold boundaries of the pure and the safe, as Mary Douglas observed. This holds true for more than the social groups Douglas described. Nation, subject, and even film texts are subject to this same sort of border control (the cinema censor, after all, determines and excises unacceptable pieces). Judith Butler puts it even more directly: abjection is a means of making shit out of the other. Small wonder that trash, ruins, and recycling recur in New German films as di-

verse as *Karl May* (Syberberg, 1974), *The Blind Director,* and the queer films that followed them.

HOW QUEER IS IT?

In the Introduction, I argued that feminist, gay, lesbian, and queer directors of the New German Cinema could not be unified under a single term. Their relationship to the movement at large was certainly fractured and varied: Fassbinder was its biggest *Autor*; Schroeter, despite his considerable influence, remained at the movement's periphery; Treut started working after its demise; and for one scholar at least, Ottinger should not even be included in it.[7] All of these directors have been out for years. Yet as I stated before, except for von Praunheim, all have expressed no interest whatsoever in being identified as gay or lesbian, and have rejected in equal measure the idea that they produce gay or lesbian films. Ottinger compared it to "being put in a little drawer."[8] To take these directors "out of the drawer" and assert that they were among the more lionized of New German Cinema's *Autoren* is misguided, to say the least. For, despite all the critical acclaim and prizes procured at festivals, gay and lesbian films received poor distribution, particularly outside of Germany. Like that of even the best-known East German directors, documentarians, and experimental filmmakers, their work was not deemed as commercially viable as that of the more popular *Autoren* during the movement's heyday.

If the economic and institutional barriers facing emerging queer filmmakers in Germany are not suprising, we should also acknowledge the critical and theoretical ones they faced. Most conspicuous was the Mitscherlichs' thesis of a national "inability to mourn." How sensitive could this model of a mass unconscious be to groups who suffered and mourned for different reasons and in different ways?[9] How contrite should a gay man be for a country that outlawed his sexual activity decades after the end of the war?[10] How is he supposed to identify with this ur-project? What strategies could gay- and lesbian-oriented cinema catalyze? The obstreperous aspects of melancholia (which also inform kitsch and camp) repudiate that account and demonstrate that the prevalent structures of grief and remembrance after the war were *not* appropriate to all forms of subjectivity. Not every filmmaker subscribed to the New German Cinema's Oedipal rejection of *Papaskino,* or to the heterosexual presumptions of its attempts to master the past and refortify identity, or to its reliance on familial constellations with which to stage German history. That potential appeal to lesbian, gay, and other minoritarian groups helps distinguish

these camp-driven films from the rather more "unmarked" German audiences to which Kluge and Syberberg played.

The antiformalist bias of the Young German Cinema makes it easy to see why aestheticized styles like camp and kitsch would face resistance—recall Christian Thompsen's response to Fassbinder's campier productions. Indeed, that injunction against artifice was an obstacle to the movement's prequeer filmmakers, particularly its female constituency: Ottinger's campy *Madame X* was released to a notoriously frosty feminist reception. Since the 1980s, however, that same self-consciousness has turned films *like Madame X* into cult artifacts, thanks to film culture's fascination with excess at the end of the century and to queer film studies, critical frameworks that helped take these films "out" of a strictly New German context.

Queerness is a relation rather than a position. It is inseparable from a heterosexual mainstream, for instance, since it helps constitute it. From a queer perspective, opposing straight/hegemonic/majoritarian to gay/lesbian/minoritarian does not address the variety of human sexual experiences, identifications, and identities. Similarly, queerness challenges the dualistic opposition of dominant to "sub"culture, or mainstream to alternative or oppositional, since these paired terms are constantly colliding with one another. (Filmmaker Werner Schroeter, for instance, asserts that he doesn't tell different stories, he just tells them differently; Straub and Huillet argue that they produce conventional cinema and refuse the sanctuary of authorship.)[11] As an interpretive strategy of the cinema—as opposed, say, to a taxonomic one—queerness does not follow naturally from the themes of a film, nor from the biographical details of its director. Of course, identity-based labeling of directors and / or films as gay, lesbian, or queer can be strategically crucial, but queerness helps show that there is not a one-to-one correlation between textual content and its producer. Is Fassbinder's *Petra von Kant* a lesbian film? Is Schroeter a gay director for having made female-centered films that are not overtly about lesbianism, like *Willow Springs* (1973), *Malina*, or *The Death of Maria Malibran?* Ultimately, queerness emerges from the texts' positions in culturally and historically circumscribed reading formations.

My intention is not to argue that camp is absent in the New German Cinema's straighter success stories. Its presence in films like *Our Hitler* is impossible to deny, and its social and somatic mischief is equally central to the work of Herbert Achternbusch and Helmut Costard, among others, working in and alongside the movement. That said, I believe it is nonetheless important to respect the differences in queer and lesbian- and gay-generated camp practices in the New German Cinema, partly for the challenge they present *to* the historical, representational, and identificatory

concerns of the movement at large. For instance, for all of his cinematic excesses and his own inflamed love of opera, someone like Alexander Kluge would never be called camp. His approach to history and the kinds of questions he poses also stand in marked contrast to directors like Ottinger, Schroeter, and Lothar Lambert.

I use the term "prequeer" to describe this work with some reservation. Since queer cinema emerged after the New German Cinema, I do not want to suggest that these earlier films inevitably or teleologically lead to queerness. Secondly, queer cinema is not a German phenomenon. British and North American directors, like Derek Jarman, Todd Haynes, and Greg Araki, first drew the label, and U.S. critic B. Ruby Rich claims to have been the first to use it. Even with queer cinema's current international status, it cannot shake the fact that it originated beyond German borders. As Alice Kuzniar notes, "queer" is not widely used in contemporary German gay cultures; there, as elsewhere, many nonheterosexuals (von Praunheim, for instance) do not self-identify as queer. "Although 'queer' does not deny that there are gays and lesbians," Kuzniar writes, "it recognizes variations within these constituencies and a plethora of identificatory sites. It signals difference, but not the binary difference of masculine men/feminine women, homo/hetero, normal/pathologizing, or even gay/lesbian."[12] While I am more reluctant than Kuzniar to align queerness with a tacit postmodernist project, I find its critical expansiveness both attractive and useful. Because it can critique a variety of heterosexual practices and assumptions, queerness is not restricted to current films, nor just to "gay" or "lesbian" directors. It refuses to place homosexual culture at the margins or give it a separate history. Queerness is not outside, it is just out.

THE QUEER ALLEGORY

Kuzniar compellingly situates allegory at the heart of queer readings. Even traditional allegorical representation, she notes, questions language's ability to signify directly by highlighting disjunctures between sign and referent. Unlike metaphors, which try to form stable relationships between signs and referents, the piecemeal, metonymic process of allegory does not attempt to unify meaning: in fact, it is not really out to produce anything. In this way it challenges notions of productivity that govern not only textual hermeneutics (analysis is supposed to yield something, after all), but the imperatives of capitalism and reproductive heterosexuality. Walter Benjamin's particular elaboration makes allegory even more useful, constructing it as a detached, fragmented connection, of which Kluge's notion

of *Zusammenhang* is but one example. In invoking that understanding of allegory, I do not mean to suggest that "detachment" elicits nonempathetic reactions on the part of the reader, auditor, or viewer—although it can, to be sure. Rather, allegory activates partial, even antagonistic identifications or disidentifications, which can incorporate attachment as well as detachment, pleasure and critique simultaneously.[13]

Allegory names in tangential, indirect ways. It can point to hopes, untold histories, or unsanctioned desires that have elided symbolization or recognition. Since it does not lead directly back to a referent or to another interpretative endpoint, and since it hides as much as it discloses, allegory is a crucial piece of nonheterosexual interpretive economies (Kuzniar discusses queerness in general; we will consider camp more particularly). As she points out, because queer desires are often delegitimized, if not altogether censored, allegory becomes significant for standing in for something that has not been articulated. To be sure, this may suggest that allegory is a representational project of the closet, but what Kuzniar really addresses is the limits of representation *tout court*. The intensity of allegory emerges *precisely for* its resistance to being fixed or attached to an object or person with any stabilizing harmony. Recall the asynchronous soundtracks and dubbing in *Holy Whore* and *The Death of Maria Malibran*, in which vocal representations do not lead back to a particular source, body, or character. It is easy to see how music, the connotative associations of which are notoriously difficult to fix in the first place, can be aligned with allegory. As Adorno once wrote, "Time and again it [music] points to the fact that it signifies something, something definite. Only the intention is always veiled."[14]

Like melancholia and Musik-Shock, allegory works with heightened referentiality, hyperbolized style, and theatricalized performance, as if to acknowledge its own representational inadequacies.[15] Its compensatory impulse recalls Freud's work on melancholia: its exaggerated theatrics exist because adequate structures of mourning simply do not. Absence becomes a psychological, erotic, stylistically charged hot spot. Again, Kuzniar elaborates, "Fragmentariness alone thus becomes eroticized, the allure of the not shown. This [queer experimental] cinema fetishizes the partial object relying on brevity, intensity, and obliqueness. Its disjointedness in turn creates a cult object."[16] By rejecting wholeness and semantic fixity, allegory lands on the side of replaceable, material objects.

There are obviously strong connections between this concept of queer allegory and the hermeneutic practice advocated by Benjamin and Kluge. While these men are not exactly the patron saints of queer theory, their usefulness to these new interpretative modalities is undeniable. Most crucial is the fascination they share with the physical (as opposed to the timeless or

transcendent) nature of the allegorical fragment, which often takes form in human bodies. Given that the New German Cinema constantly exposed the incompatibility of image/sound and the subject it ostensibly depicted or attracted, one notes how Lacanian theories of subjectivity work alongside allegorical representation. For Lacan's subject begins as "substance, or objective matter that constituted part of the world" but moves on, through the "sheer incident of misrecognition" to fashion itself apart from that material world as "a patched-together mass that [the subject] is compelled to mistake for a distinct and autonomous entity."[17] It would seem that the New German Cinema draws energy precisely from these very kinds of "mistakes," targeting the fragments, false identifications, and insatiable desires in its attempts to "patch together" postwar social and psychic identities.

The ghosts of Benjamin and Lacan are not the only ones haunting such arguments. The allegorical process Kuzniar details is, as I have already suggested, vested in melodramatic and melancholic modalities: consider its sense of urgency, surrogacy, exaggeration, vagueness, and the unlikelihood of closure. It is hardly surprising that melancholia has become important to contemporary work in queer subjectivity, and it is worth underscoring at this point that this kind of melancholia eschews the hand-wringing self-denial of its traditional psychoanalytic elaboration. This is not to say that queer allegory is uninvolved with the abjection to which melancholia points, since, as we shall see with von Praunheim and Schroeter, abjection is a crucial piece of the process. But allegory's presence in camp and kitsch helps show the roles that desire and fantasy play in the production of different histories.

BODY CAMP

At the hands of directors like Fassbinder and Kluge, bodies were utterly deconstructed, often torn apart limb by limb, so as to leave little possibility of recovery. There were exceptions, to be sure (like Kluge's Allewisch), but it is clear that neither director cared to actualize fantasies of cohesion and wholeness, even if they were sensitive to their very power. As if following the dictum that the more pessimistic the outcome, the greater the need for alternatives, these directors passed that task on to filmgoers. Without wanting to minimize the process, I nonetheless find it difficult to shake a sense of overdetermination in some of their (and other directors') choices. In general, history is enacted *upon* bodies rather than *with* them, a scenario that not only bereaves figures of agency but places them in an antagonistic, reflective, and passive relationship to historical events.

The films of the New German Cinema would often evacuate characters of any auratic, erotic luster, often with debilitating results. Their bodies became the carriers of so many signs of social, political, and economic injustices (the suicides of Fox, Veronika Voss, and Elwira), injustices that were elaborated through blows to the head (*Knife in the Head)* or the removal of limbs (*Berlin Alexanderplatz*), teeth (*Germany, Pale Mother*), or knees (*The Patriot*). Heaven help them should they try to act on their own agency: Elwina/Elvira's transsexual surgery in Fassbinder's *The Year of Thirteen Moons* painfully dramatizes the gap between human desire and its fulfillment. Here, what seems to be the character's "own" decision to undergo sex change surgery was motivated by an offhand remark of a cruel, disinterested lover. Even when bodies were left intact, as when allegorizing nation in films like *The Tin Drum, Even Dwarves Start Small, The American Friend,* or *Lola,* they seemed too neat an allegory, passive reflections of a cohesive, if troubled, Germany.

In queer German films like *Dorian Gray* and *Taxi zum Klo,* bodies tend to outstrip the one-to-one correspondence of conventional allegories in films like *Germany, Pale Mother.* More prop than character, these camped-up bodies intensify the sense of role-playing critics associate with the New German Cinema at large. In contrast to some of their more mainstream depictions, these bodies are not first and foremost sites of ruination. Thomas Elsaesser elaborates these differences: "Rather than internalise the latent conflicts which German postwar history and the legacy of a particular culture had programmed into them, feminist and gay filmmakers in particular tried to restage the traumas in their films, often making the body itself the site of division, transgression and the transformation of sexual identity. . . . New German films escaped into 'perversion,' the pleasurable side of neurosis."[18] The "pleasurable side of neurosis" and "perversion" is precisely what Kurt Raab achieves in his prop-laden masquerade as Stefan George in *Satan's Brew* or as the "Butcher of Hanover" in Lommel's *The Tenderness of Wolves.*[19] Hyperbolic, sexually unmoored bodies inhabit *Verführung: Die grausame Frau / Seduction: The Cruel Woman* (1985), *Freak Orlando* (1981), *Horror Vacui* (1984), and *The Death of Maria Malibran.* Bodies are positioned differently in relation to German historical circumstances than they are in films by Kluge, Reitz, and Syberberg, for whom Nazism, postwar recovery, and questions of German identity always provided the grounding point. Unanswered fantasies of lost national or somatic unity were perhaps best emblematized by *The Patriot*'s knee, which opines, "I'd still be a part of something bigger, if Corporal Wieland, my former master . . . part of something bigger, part of our beautiful Germany."

The campier films offer a wider variety of cultural touchstones and reference points, such as to "lowbrow" cultural production, to lesbian and gay icons, and to smaller cultural communities. In general, they are less overtly historical than films like *The Patriot* or Fassbinder's West German trilogy, and are not set in the past or against the backdrop of war and postwar Germany. For example, the primary historical context of Ottinger's early films was arguably derived from contemporary debates in German feminist film circles and lesbian cultures and not the more widely broadcast debates on national identity. Although her films made references to specific German events, they, like those of other lesbian, gay, and queer directors, did not generate a sense of a debt to the past or to questions surrounding Germany's war and postwar periods that the New German Cinema had raised with such fanfare. Treut, for instance (who slightly preceded the movement), has more in common with American gender theorists Judith Butler, Sandy Stone, and Donna Haraway than with the Mitscherlichs and their notion of *Trauerarbeit*.

Campy cinema, like musicals, operas, and performance art, will often enrapture its viewers. They give pleasure in a way that the adversarial asceticism of modernism (or of feminist and apparatus film theory of the 1970s and 1980s) could not, and through texts that might have been unthinkable or objectionable at the time. They flirt with aspects of what German culture would suppress, including not just its past, but unwanted expressions of emotions and pleasure. These characteristics of camp, I believe, can help us to move forward *with* the idea of role-playing, props, and absence, rather than lamenting lost imagined integrities of body, psyche, or nation.

IDENTITY, NATION, AND BORDERS

Given the movement's obsession with identity and boundaries, it is scarcely surprising that films of the New German Cinema frequently addressed trespassing and border-crossings. In Wim Wenders's road movies they are thematic and geographical (*Alice in the Cites, Tokyo-ga, Until the End of the World*); with Schlöndorff, embedded in their production histories (France would coproduce his first hit, *Young Törless,* and stay involved in internationally funded films like *Un amour de Swann* [1983] and *Voyager* [1992]). There is the cross-pollination of North American and German music in *Holy Whore,* the fusion of high and low music in Schroeter, and the genderbending of Ottinger, Treut, Fassbinder, and others. Boundaries are especially fraught in Treut, Ottinger, and von Praunheim's work, where there are splits between inside / outside, health / illness, norms / deviance, and other opposing terms.

If the prequeer German cinema suggests new routes for desire and identity, it is also no coincidence that the films of Ottinger and Treut are obsessed with journeys and roads normally not followed. Journeys are prominent throughout Ulrike Ottinger's films: the lead character of *Ticket of No Return* tours Berlin in order to drink herself to death; *Exil Shanghai / Exile Shanghai* (1997) follows different generations of German Jewish émigrés who moved there. Since the mid- to late 1980s, Ottinger has used a form of theatricalized ethnography (*Taiga* [1991/2], *Johanna d'Arc of Mongolia* [1989], as well as the more straightforward documentary form in *Exile Shanghai*). These films are as meticulously crafted as her initial features, like *Ticket of No Return, Freak Orlando, Portrait of Dorian Gray,* and *Madame X,* but have nevertheless confounded critics eager to reconcile them with these stylized early films. I want only to stress here that *both* periods foreground the artifice of filmmaking and present "something . . . made visible again."[20]

The voyages of Monika Treut tend to be literal and geographical (*My Father Is Coming* [1991]), as well as abstract, trekking into realms of gender, sexuality, and identity (*Seduction: A Cruel Woman*). That nomadism seems to mimic Treut's movements as a director. Based in Hamburg, she spends considerable time outside of Germany, often in U.S. cities like San Francisco and New York, where she finds many of the sexual outlaws interviewed in films like *Female Misbehavior* (1992), *Didn't Do It for Love* (1997), and *Gendernauts* (1999). Her queer approach treats boundary-bending figures with respect and humor, features that also inflect her fiction films, like *Virgin Machine* and "The Taboo Parlor" in *Erotique* (Treut/Borden/Magalhäes/Law, 1994).

One of the boundaries Treut's work undoes is that of "nation." According to Kuzniar, Treut refuses to

> map sexual preference onto national differences, an insidious move that would reify gay/straight and native/foreign oppositions. Insofar as their characters *cross* boundaries, Treut and von Praunheim work against a binary mode of perception that creates otherness, whether it be sexual or ethnic exoticism. This crossing or permeability stands in distinct contrast to earlier German films, such as Werner Herzog's *Stroszek* (1976) or Wim Wenders's *Alice in de Städten / Alice in the Cities* (1974) and *Der Stand der Dinge / The State of Things* (1982), . . . the effortless crossing of cultural barriers is simultaneously a very natural crossing or obscuring of heterosexual gender boundaries.[21]

To be sure, the project of disturbing national boarders has special urgency today. German unification has helped force the question of differences within the country's boundaries, and Europe faces that same issue as it re-

structures itself economically in a global capitalist system. In this sense, Kuzniar's efforts to queer cultural and geographical boundaries are entirely compelling. Yet it goes without saying that undoing nation and turning geographical boundaries into permeable borders is easier said than done. And deconstructing these things is not necessarily a progressive project: transnational capital effaces borders, bankrupting local economies and entire nations in the process; there is the endurance of violent ethnic nationalisms, and so on. As desirable as it is to eschew "reifying gay/straight and native/foreign oppositions," however, it is important to stress, as Kuzniar does, their permeability rather than their full demise. These debates and tensions inform the way Treut constructs place, history, and nation in *Virgin Machine.*

Virgin Machine is Treut's first solo feature. It opens with Dorothee (Ina Blum) in Hamburg, where she is researching romantic love and is involved in some unsatisfactory relationships with some unsatisfactory men, among them Heinz, an older man with a sweaty face, and Bruno, her androgynous stepbrother. Dorothee's undepicted mother lives in America; she had been a stripper and was unhappy in her marriage. When Bruno informs Dorothee that their mother wants to see her, the film's maternal melodramatic dimensions are given a chance to develop, but once Dorothee is stateside, characters actively discourage her from tracking down her mother. Quickly immersed in the lesbian and queer cultures of San Francisco, she meets, among others, Susie Sexpert (played with verve by Susie Bright, *On Our Backs* editor) and the alluring Ramona (Shelly Mars), whose television advertisement promises "a cure for those addicted to romance." In an extraordinary performance, Ramona, dressed as a man, performs a striptease in a lesbian club, jerking off with a beer-bottle penis. Captivated, Dorothee contacts her and the two go on an extended date and have what by all appearances is passionate sex. At the end of the encounter, however, Ramona presents Dorothee a bill, which shatters not her heart so much as the delusions she had had about romantic love, and she laughs out loud. We next see her performing in the same nightclub, and the film concludes with Dorothee riding her bicycle, tossing torn-up photos of herself with German lovers by the Golden Gate Bridge.

Virgin Machine establishes two distinct diegetic spaces: Hamburg and San Francisco. Hamburg is gendered as a world of men and family relations, marked by "serious" research, traditional romantic quests and requirements, and grotesquely conventionalized sex roles. San Francisco, on the other hand, is a space filled with women, lesbian desire and gazes, sexual indeterminacy, playfulness, and erotic role-playing.[22] Whereas in Hamburg Dorothee is intrigued by the "hormonal and electrical aspects of

love," dialogue that biologizes sex and even romance in no uncertain terms, the second portion of the film unmoors desire from any ties to biology and sticky romance. There, as one critic notes, "female sexual pleasure is anything but 'natural.' "[23]

In a way, *both* worlds are denaturalized by being depicted so hyperbolically. In Hamburg, sex with Heinz is a frightful affair, with his bald head and lecherous smile dominating the film frame. We see Dorothee sailing with goofy gentility in a dress and wide-brimmed hat, scoping out potential lovers from the boat. Like her mother, whom we are told had the same "sickness," in Germany, Dorothee is "addicted to romance." Once in San Francisco, love assumes very different form, primarily as acts involving female sex workers, foreigners, and a variety of cultural fugitives. Doors left ajar and television and computer screens provide a variety of tableaux (s/m scenarios, love for hire, computer porn) that stage sex almost as conspicuously as Ramona's strip show. Although neither city is depicted "naturally," Hamburg represents a place where *romance and sexuality* are naturalized through biological and other scientific explanations. San Francisco, by contrast, denaturalizes romance and sexuality by placing them into material and materialist contexts.

It is finally unclear whether Treut wants Hamburg to exist simply as a diegetic region or as a metonymic stand-in for Germany. Clearly, it is an area filled with strange men and even stranger attitudes, the perverse norm against which *Virgin Machine* rails. In Treut's work more generally, Germany usually functions as the sexually outmoded fatherland left behind for the lesbian and queer communities of other countries. That point is dramatized in *My Father Is Coming*, whose protagonist, Vicki, a young German lesbian living in New York, receives an unexpected visit from her father to whom she has not come out. Soon after arriving in the States, he undergoes a sexual awakening, invigorated by no less a sex professional than Annie Sprinkle.

Treut's work delights in the uprooting of female desires. But it also tends to relocate them in subcultural spaces such as those of urban America, which are, once again, racked up against the old, heterosexual male traditions of Europe and Germany. Although the question of nation is not at the forefront of the director's mind, *Virgin Machine* never explores why Germany functions as the-place-that-one-leaves-behind. Even the quickness with which Dorothee dispatches her search for her mother, who symbolizes part of the geographically specific past, is striking. When she tears up the photographs at the end, it seems as if she were abandoning the idea or memory of Germanness as well. Clearly, Dorothee is moving forward—the bicycle leaves no doubt about that. But it is worth considering which aspects of

identity enable people to traverse these spaces in the first place. How, for example, is nation entwined with racial, ethnic, and financial privilege?

Marcia Klotz explores this problematic in her compelling analyses of *Virgin Machine* and *My Father Is Coming*.[24] In *Virgin,* she focuses on a brief series of shots taken from Dorothee's balcony that shows a white prostitute and several black men in the street. Dorothee observes in voice-over, "The reason why the sex industry is so desolate is because women have so little say in it." Elsewhere in the film, women have *all sorts of things to say* about sex work, and most of them are depicted as being very much in charge of their profession, a perception abetted by casting actual sex professionals like Bright and Sprinkle. In the scene Klotz isolates, however, the prostitute is not even given a voice,[25] and the film never returns to her. Thus there is an enormous discrepancy between this outdoor scene and the indoor spaces on which the film concentrates. Protected, these interiors are primarily inhabited by white women, and they are characterized by liberating, indeterminate female sexualities. This, as Klotz states, is painfully at odds with the street scene where coerced sexuality of the woman, poverty, and racial difference are anything but indeterminate.

If *Virgin Machine* raises the question of race, *Father* brings ethnicity, Germanness, and the Shoah into earshot. In one scene, Vicki and her father are refused service at a Jewish deli, whose owners ask her father what he did during the Nazi years. Panicked, he dashes to the women's room, where a comforting Annie Sprinkle awaits him in another feminine, white sexual sanctuary. Klotz compares: "Like the Tenderloin prostitute in *Virgin Machine,* the memory of the Holocaust, marked by Jewish anger and German guilt, is left at the periphery of the films' frame of reference. . . . It is invoked as a vague source of discomfort for the main [white, predominantly German] characters, who are nevertheless able to escape it."[26]

Virgin Machine thus admits the influences of nation, class, and ethnicity upon identity and desire, only, it would seem, to deflect them. The presence of fluent German-speaking adults from South America in San Francisco, for instance, remains curiously unexplained. Because Treut refused to grant nationhood any real authority, Germany becomes a disintegrated text that recedes, much as it did at the end of *The Patriot.* And, like that film, political and historical issues potentially recede along with it.

VIRGIN MACHINE AND BODY CAMP

Virgin Machine makes its connection to gender performativity literally in several performances, most overtly the drag scene in which Shelly Mars

Ramona's drag striptease in Treut's *Virgin Machine*

sheds her male props and costume in a raucous striptease. Practically a textbook illustration of Butler's ideas, the sequence disrupts any notion of gender as a somatic given. It is perhaps the film's campiest moment—although Susie Sexpert's dildo discussion comes close. By stressing the replaceable nature of body parts (the banana and beer-bottle penis), she disables their function as fixed markers of gender. Moreover, her performance as Martin doesn't so much inhabit or imitate masculinity, as heterosexual readings might argue, so much as establish the masculine body as an already unsteady series of objects and actions. Compellingly, Treut relies upon conventionally coded body parts *to render absent* the same, gendered bodies from which they are derived. The material body, in other words, is thus not far behind all this role-playing, appearing in displaced bits, like so many allegorical fragments.

In contrast to the boisterous club show, the sex scene between Dorothee and Ramona is shot without sound in a private setting with minimal background. It is a very intimate space. Elfi Mikesch's lush, near-expressionistic cinematography suggests the externalization of deep-seated desire (and, indeed, Dorothee has been dying to get Ramona in bed). At first, this love scene appears to rally against the idea of the body as constructed virgin machine. In contrast to the denaturalizing drag sequence, here women's parts—breasts, skin, lips, eyes—seem lovingly and naturally situated on the two figures. (That it is Ramona's character in each sequence only in-

Ramona and Dorothee's sex scene in *Virgin Machine*

tensifies the differential treatment her body receives.) Yet what initially passes as lovemaking is soon exposed as a business transaction, revealing a regulated economy of desire in a system of exchange that recalls Kluge's calculation of "the value of emotions." Romantic expressivity is undone in a flash: "lovemaking" becomes a paid, professional act.

Importantly, *Virgin Machine* does not try to locate resistance in lesbian or transgendered sexualities or in crossdressing, nor does it construct male or heterosexual female bodies as intrinsically flawed or politically repugnant.[27] Regarding the women campily performing womanhood in *Virgin Machine*, womanhood is not sent up or put down, but simply put on.

Clearly Treut's bodies are less brutalized by the overlayered systems, economies, and technologies of desire than in a film like *The Power of Emotion*, where "unhappy feelings are worth more." *Virgin Machine* shows an eroticism and physical pleasure that is more or less missing from Kluge's ironic materialism. Although I hesitate to discuss these issues in terms of character, it is nevertheless instructive to note how often Kluge withholds pleasure from his film figures. And even if his filmgoers might form productive, pleasurable connections, the terms of the connection-making remain pretty much set: Germany's history, its enduring educational and cultural power plants, and the rationalized systems in which human labor, bodies, and emotions operate. Kluge's and Treut's aims and contexts are quite different, to be sure: Kluge was interested in institutional oppression

and the untapped histories and desires that might be excavated from underneath it. Ten years later, Treut has a less centralized understanding of power and institutionalization, influenced by queer culture, feminism, and critical theory. In contrast to Kluge, Treut downplays the idea of a national past to such an extent that only the skimpiest of clichés represent it. Thus it is less a German history that *Virgin Machine* and *My Father Is Coming* address than an as-yet-unsettled history of contemporary feminist, lesbian, and queer cultures.

As Dorothee merrily rides her vehicle in the final scene, we have one of German cinema's few examples of forward-looking endings and active beginnings. It provides a stark contrast to the long, static take of the couple staring blankly in a motionless car at the end of *The Power of Emotion*. We can also recall the end of *The Patriot*, as history teacher Gabi Teichert, a figure with even less agency, "looks forward to the new materials" of the upcoming year. Dorothee's future, by contrast, not only looks good, but her past is *camped up* rather than *dug up*. Treut's deconstruction absolutely lacks the sense of ruination and loss that pervades Kluge (or Fassbinder's) films. Redemption is not needed here. Yet, at the same time, part of the freedom intimated by Treut's work seems a consequence of unasked questions about race, nation, history, and class—in spite of provocative details like San Francisco's poor white prostitute and its South American Germans.

FANTASY FLOATS

If the last image from Treut's *Virgin Machine* implies a queer "pushing off" from the New German Cinema, Ulrike Ottinger's *Madame X* demonstrates that nascent queer issues and aesthetics were well at work during the movement's heyday. Early films like *Madame X* treat female bodies as icons of resplendent, stylized physicality in an even campier fashion than Treut. Ottinger is at pains to show what might be called the de-idealization behind idealization and the dystopian side of female fantasies and desires. *Madame X*'s references come from a wide array of contexts: feminist literature and theory, the economic problems female filmmakers faced at the time of the New German Cinema, clichéd depictions of women handed down by Hollywood melodrama, the worlds of homosocial pirate movies, Nazi iconography, and lesbian utopias. Like Ottinger's subsequent films *Freak Orlando* and *Dorian Gray, Madame X* is obsessed with props, objects, noises, music, and voice.

Like most good fantasies, the plot line of *Madame X* is minimal. Madame X is the leader of a pirate ship sailing for the "south seas," who

enlists women to abandon their workaday lives for a "world full of gold/love/adventure at sea" on her Chinese junket, *Orlando*. Voiced over in telegram-style English, that message is transmitted through a number of unlikely sources: Brillo boxes, newspapers, cockpits, car phones, psychiatric clients, and boxes afloat on water. The recipients? A campy selection of female clichés, among them Ohio housewife Betty Brillo; Noa Noa, a young Polynesian; Australian bush pilot Omega Centauri; and pampered Italian vedette Miss Blow-Up. Arriving on board, they bring along what Ottinger calls the "destructive impact civilization has had on them." Over the course of the film, they shed the outward signs of acculturation, boiling them down to their nasty, primal bases. As their costumes and demeanor reflect this change, the film regresses to nonlinguistic sounds and stagy scenes of intense childish ambivalence towards Madame X. Women begin to mimic Madame X's look and actions as their desires (attraction, rivalry, rebellion) are played out on the ship's floating stage. Violating X's wishes, for instance, they collectively save the hermaphrodite sailor, Belcanto. Most characters are killed off by Madame X's double, the mechanized figurehead who acts out and externalizes the diabolical desires of the actual leader, who is equally a cyborg because of her prosthetic hand. At the end of the film, the boat has docked and the members of the dead crew are reincarnated in new frocks (Freud-Goldmund becomes a punk—someone who might formerly have been her patient, as Ottinger quips) and reboard the vessel, presumably for another adventure.

At this point, *Madame X*'s own "adventures" are worth mentioning. When it was released in the late 1970s, established feminist audiences in Germany and abroad preferred socially relevant documentaries and autobiographical filmmaking by female directors. *Madame X* was very badly received;[28] *frauen und film* didn't even deign to review it. (Treut was one of the few to step to its defense.) Ottinger seems to have anticipated criticisms that her film traded in fetishism and eroticized power—which is precisely the point. The film is in poor taste, as we hear the voice-over remark while Madame X examines booty acquired from the yacht she raided: "Madame X felt disgust at all this incredible, luxurious bad taste." Whereas, diegetically, the repulsion is a response to the extravagant possessions of the upper-class boaters, the film deliberately produces its *own* stockpile of "incredible bad taste." Clearly an attack on the realist agenda of women's filmmaking in Germany of the time, Ottinger refers to *Madame X* as "a comedy about feminism" interlaced with fascist parable and lesbian fantasy. As for her stylistic decisions, she states: "When an elderly woman carries a bucket of coal that is too heavy for her to make it to the top of the stairs, I can help her or not help her. If I don't help her, it's not going to be a film

that will change my behavior. I don't believe that we can transform society anymore by showing it as it is."[29]

Role-playing marks *Madame X* from the start. No attempt is made to disguise the fact that the China seas on which the boat sails is staid old Lake Constance—revealing the film's low budget. (At this point in the history of the New German Cinema, it seems utterly reasonable for a female director to fantasize about pirating the bounty her male colleagues had been reaping.) Female characters are introduced one by one in voice-overs, dashing any coherent diegetic world or verisimilitudinous presentation. Betty Brillo is introduced in freeze frame, recounting her life in terms of her relationship to a generic "him," her solipsistic husband. Frozen in her kitchen, the prolonged shot sends the message that she was locked in a role that was itself stuck. Other figures enjoy more movement (but not more satisfaction): artist Josephine de Collage, played by filmmaker Yvonne Rainer, glides around on roller skates, reading philosophical, aesthetic, and political treatises; flyer Omega Centauri has a star dyed onto the top of her head, a shorthand for her fondness of the heavens. Flora Tannenbaum, clad in hunter's green, is introduced while taking her morning coffee at a small table in the middle of the woods. "Native" Noa Noa—a nod to Gauguin's colonialist erotics[30]—and Miss Blow-Up, Italian glamour queen, come straight from central casting.

It would be hard to refute that these icons appear unfulfilled by their clichéd roles, given their readiness to escape to the high seas. Yet their hyperbolized depiction makes such a point rather moot. Reduced to campy archetypes, these women are simply figures used to stage an exotic escape fantasy. Like many other characters in the New German Cinema, they cannot be psychologized. As Patricia White has argued, "The 'characters' are not realistic. Nor are they allegorical. They serve as so many figures in a *mise-en-scene* of female bodies which work through specific possibilities and scenarios of desire within the background fantasy of the pirate ship, the women's movement, lesbian utopia."[31]

THE SOUNDS OF HYBRIDITY

Good camp that it is, *Madame X* highlights the material, sensual features of its figures: their makeup, their costumes, their movements. After the crew's pirate raid, the booty is inventoried so as to underscore its lush physicality: "Ninety-seven cushions of crimson damask laid with silver parchments, footstools with cloth tissue, and thirteen yellow satin chairs." As these references to textures, fabrics, and tactility demonstrate, camp is

more than visual image. Its surfaces can be appreciated through a number of senses, even though critics typically address its visual component.

Not incidentally, homosexuality has been read in much the same way. Diana Fuss writes that "[i]n its popular incarnations . . . [homosexuality] is 'gleaned' from the surface of the body. [H]omosexuals are said to distinguish themselves by their extravagant dress, their exaggerated mannerisms, their hysterical intonations, their insatiable oral sex drives, and their absurd imitations of 'feminine' and 'masculine' behavior."[32] Putting aside the absurdity of taking such tendencies for ontological truths, Fuss's remarks underscore the extent to which homosexual identity, so aligned with the play of appearance, finds a parallel in camp. Camp's key terms come from visual cultures: "cliché" from photographic reproduction; "mimicry," from mime performance and from colonial and African-American cultures. Rather than simply reconceptualize camp's "surface" as visual image, both Ottinger and Treut use sound and music as components of camp's material surfaces.

Treut's *Virgin Machine* is filled with sounds that scream out their physicality: traffic, bikes, boats, planes, wind, rain, dripping faucets, typing, telephones, television sets—the sounds are edited in, amplified, goofy in their noticeability. Most of them provide imaginary commentary on what is visually depicted. When Dorothee and her brother stage a puppet drama recounting a story of happiness forfeited for love, we hear the camped-up sounds of a frenzied thunderstorm. When she ponders the socio-sexual aspects of biological love, we hear chimpanzees; elsewhere and throughout the film, we hear children and dogs. The sounds of animals provide a fascinating motif in a film intent on blurring boundaries like German/non-German; lesbian/nonlesbian; organic/mechanical. (Significantly, Treut's production company is named Hyena Films, after the animal that has features of two sexes.) Dorothee's ambiguously sexualized friend, Dominique, states that her "great love" is her scrappy cat, a remark that is just a playful statement of fact. These animal motifs help primordialize the desires that run every which way in *Virgin Machine*. They also evince a sense of physical embodiedness that endures despite the film's deconstruction of human gender and sexuality. Mixed species, mixed genders: Treut's hybrids reinscribe nature, while simultaneously questioning what is considered *natural*.

Virgin Machine is just as heterogeneous in its use of music. Queer in its very eclecticism, it includes music that is contemporary and electronic, and some that is vaguely classical. A schmaltzy tune recurs in bits and pieces, an all-female band performs jazz (diegetically), and different contemporary pop music forms appear over the course of the film. The disco-inflected "When Boys Talk" accompanies Ramona's performance at the club. Most other pieces are styled after the grunge rock popular in the United

States at the time of the film's production. The songs feature raw, aggressive vocals, topped by a stunning performance by Pearl Harbor, the brass-lunged singer from Los Angeles. She performs part of "Voodoo You" in pig latin (another species-bending detail) with lyrics such as,

> I thought I was a snake
> Crawling on the ground
> I thought I was a dog
> Barking like a hound
> I thought I was a cat
> Howling at the moon.

Sound is an important prop for fantasy, and Ottinger's film also has no reservation about using it to camp up her proceedings. A heartbeat, for instance, accompanies Karla Freud-Goldmond, revealing the official, quantifying form of scientific inquiry she represents. Although familiar musical pieces like "The Leader of the Pack" and Satie's "La diva de l'empire" appear in the film (accompanying the biker mama and Miss Blow-Up, respectively), music is for the most part treated like so many sound effects and is often indistinguishable from them. We hear nondiegetic roars of lions and other animals, as in *Virgin Machine*. Human voices, for the most part, fall somewhere between language, song, and rhythmic sound. The film was postdubbed, and most of the soundtrack is nonsynchronous, increasing the distances between image and sound source. When the crew attacks a fish to eat, for instance, we hear seagulls. It is an acoustic cliché that renders the female characters both hunter and prey, birds and fish (the sexual connotations of which are further developed in the lion's roars and the purring of pussycats that accompany characters like X). Like *Virgin Machine*, *Madame X* uses animal sounds to stress a raw form of instinctual desire. Beyond that, they evoke specific historical and cultural references, namely the MGM lion. At once corporate and primal, human and not, that hybrid sound turns acoustic fidelity into a joke, borrowing clichés from outside the diegesis, along with their cultural baggage. Cinematic sound does not provide a stabilizing source as it might in the form of character dialogue; instead it becomes as decorative and campy as the film's visual clichés.

Dialogue is no exception. The meaningful aspects of language deteriorate quickly in the film. At the beginning, Rainer's voice reads X's invitation in English. But *Madame X* quickly moves on to a Babel-like mixture of German, English, Russian, and other languages, steering clear of any anchoring language (say, German) and moving towards groans, roars, and other nonlinguistic sounds. Jungle noises join the abundant cackles, whoopees, and applause on the soundtrack, sounds that grow increasingly primordial as the tyrant's control of ship and crew intensifies. The frac-

tured sounds, mixed languages, and lack of sync sound all enhance the film's general sense of splintering, reflecting the breakdown of a civilized female utopia into raw desire. The acoustic clutter seems an appropriate complement to the complex fantasies of the characters.

In Ottinger's subsequent film, *Ticket of No Return*, language deteriorates just as quickly, at least as a meaningful form of communication. Few of the film's figures actually speak. One who does, Lutze, the "bag lady" (Betty Brillo from *Madame X*), babbles constantly, and her fragmented speech races from one unfinished thought to another. The trio of "Houndstooth Women" tonelessly recite social rules and regulations at various points in the film. The glamorous protagonist (again performed with sartorial splendor by Tabea Blumenschein), out to drink herself to death, is silent through almost the entire film. As the drinker's outfits grow increasingly cumbersome, sounds become more abstract and noticeable—literally obstreperous, signs of the glamour that becomes too much for her to support. At the end of the film, the character appears in a crinkly, metallic dress reminiscent of Lili Marleen's, as she moves away from the camera in a hallway full of mirrors. As she walks, we hear what sounds like crushed shards of glass: the sound, perhaps, of an "image" breaking.

In a 1981 interview, Ottinger said:

> In my opinion film should not be based on dialogue. It makes the film lack a certain sensuality which I find very important. . . . The relation of image to objects is quite different than that of words to objects. This is not to say that I consider words or sound to be superfluous. To the contrary, I am making very conscious use of sound. I am working with twelve tracks to achieve the kind of sound rhythm I want. But again, this sound rhythm does not rely on language alone but equally as much on music and noises, also on fragments of various things.[33]

This emphasis on the physical aspect of sounds, music, and noise is very much in keeping with camp's interest in surface, effect, and facade and the feel and texture of objects. It is as if Ottinger detached sounds from their standard contexts and cut them into pieces. Sounds retain their cultural and historical associations, but are sent up for fun—and possible critique. Consider the pecking birds and the hungry women, Madame X and the MGM lion, jungle music and Noa Noa.

MADAME AND MELODRAMA

It is not for nothing that Ottinger's film—and its dictatorial lead—are named Madame X, for X is a generic marker that denotes an empty space

or absence to be filled and interpreted. For Sabine Hake, it is the place of the enigmatic Woman, "the marker of her universal exchangeability, yet also . . . witness to her threatening absence."[34] Perhaps its real threat is the refusal it ultimately represents. X is also the signature of the illiterate, the place where a name *should* go, but does not. In this way, an X refuses to enter into contract with conventional forms of exchange—like narrative or gender. As Teresa de Lauretis once remarked, "Women *must either* consent or be seduced into consenting to femininity."[35] *Madame X* gives no consent. Unlike *Virgin Machine,* whose bodies might invite the erotic gazes of straight men, *Madame X* leaves such visual arrangements behind at the dock.

By splitting the character of X into two figures, Ottinger acknowledges the number of women who have already inhabited the position of the "universally exchangeable" Woman, whether as "absolute ruler" of the German seas or the fallen mother of Hollywood's oft-told story of "Madame X."[36] In this repeatedly, if not compulsively, remade melodrama, a husband discovers his wife's extramarital affair (actual or presumed, according to the version) and casts her out of his well-to-do family. Stripped of her name and access to her beloved son, Madame X ends up on skid row, destitute, mortally ill, and on trial for murder. Her son has grown up to be a public defender and is given her case, and he remains oblivious to her identity even as she discovers his.[37] "Madame X" was an exotic, sexualized cipher, in addition to playing melodrama's clichéd scorned and/or fallen woman and sacrificial mother.

On the one hand, Ottinger shifts that self-deprecating melodramatic function onto other characters, who are completely subservient to X. On the other hand, she casts that function out of the film entirely: whereas the Madame X that Hollywood fetishized was barred from the world of family and childrearing, Ottinger's character profits precisely from this renegade status, reveling in her illegitimacy and lawlessness. But the director retains X's status as a fetish object, to the apparent consternation of feminists at *frauen und film.* Significantly, as Patricia White's comments made clear, Ottinger's X is the fetish object of *women's* desires, not of the male producers and consumers enthralled by her repeated undoing in the American melodramas. Hers is clearly a very different rendering of women's melodrama than we saw at work in *Malou, Marianne and Juliane,* and *Germany, Pale Mother.*

Ottinger simultaneously overpresents and underworks melodramatic codes. If the past partly defines Madame X's present world, for instance, it does not fully determine it. A character comments that Orlando is an odd name for a boat and is told, "It goes back to a past event . . . an old love of

Orlando," and we see a kitschy flashback in which Ottinger appears as Madame X's lover, Orlando. Relaxing together on board, Orlando sees something pretty in the water. Believing the glistening object to be flowers she can give her lover, she reaches for what turns out to be a carnivorous jellyfish that consumes her; Madame X's efforts to save her are in vain. X's right forearm floats among the debris of the hungry creature—a campy cry from the usually sentimentalized deaths of conventional Hollywood melodrama.[38]

In contrast to other films of New German Cinema discussed here, *Madame X* is reluctant to let its female characters "stay dead." Orlando lives on in the name of X's boat. Its crew returns at the end of the film, reincarnated as wild new stereotypes. Ottinger does not treat death as a sacred act or a redemptive ritual, as it had been for some of the movement's male characters. Nor is death punitive of feminine characters, as it was in Wagner's *Parsifal* or Kluge's *The Patriot*:

> Death in [*Madame X*] is a metaphor for change. If we really want to change, something within us must die in order to let the new arise on the emotional level. It means that old seemingly immutable structures are being taken seriously. For even if we know in our head how we should act, we fall back on our feelings, again and again. But feelings can be reeducated, only this is a terribly long process, it is almost an organic event, it is a kind of death.[39]

Ottinger's cameo depicts her reading Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, a novel that, like her film, reworked the past through a gendered lens. The book was a crucial part of feminist history for women in the 1970s and 1980s. As Ottinger says (as much about the boat as the book), "Orlando stands for a utopia, the utopia of a total love everyone knows doesn't exist—and Orlando is the ideal of the past, which sets up another utopia."[40] The director states that she was drawn to Woolf's Orlando, "this character who was able to change sex and who lived over centuries. Some things remained constant while others changed—and I really liked that."[41] If the reincarnations at the end of her film simply restock female fantasies with new object-forms with which to repeat the fantasy, so be it. That is how fantasy operates.

Ottinger not only refuses to victimize her "X," but turns the figure into a victimizer. Governing in the most absurd, "absolute" fashion, she kills off most of her crew by the end of the film. Her decisions and desires remain unexplained—the flashback only explains the name of her ship, her lost lover, and her lost forearm. No warm, fuzzy womyn's utopia here. The film throws lesbian desires into a hokey and deliberately politically incorrect fantasy. Outfitting Madame X's double in a tight black leather outfit of-

Madame X's double strikes a pose in Ottinger's *Madame X*. Courtesy of Filmmuseum Berlin–Deutsche Kinemathek.

fended some, but, as Monika Treut argued, that is precisely the point: the "absolute tyrant" would not retain absolute power if she were unable to mobilize the desires and fantasies of others. Her outfits, along with her near-complete silence and minimal movement throughout the film, enhance her iconicity and desirability.

Both Madame X and her double, the figurehead of the boat, move with the jerkiness of automatons and ocnophiliac military officials. German history is inscribed through the campy *Sieg Heils* of X's prosthetic hand, something that Patricia White refers to as a "joke on castration." [42] But be this a joke on Nazi ritual or its homoerotic cult of male authority, a joke is always more than a joke. The "absolute power" of the robotic Madame X's *Sieg Heil*, for instance, cannot be dismissed as reckless Nazi kitsch (for one thing, associating it with a queer/lesbian body complicates such a reading).

But we soon see the arm of the figurehead depicted from a different angle, and it looks as if it is giving the finger. If, as the late Pierre Bourdieu once argued, the human "body [is] a 'memory-jogger,'" its actions, movements, and words "only have to be slipped into, like a theatrical costume, to awaken . . . a universe of ready-made feelings and experiences."[43] Precisely such a thing may well be occurring here.

To be sure, the reference of Madame X's saluting blade could hardly be lost on anyone. Yet the "universe of ready-made feelings" may not be as expansive as Bourdieu maintains, since reception contexts will always cause that universality to fluctuate. The initial audience of Ottinger's film offers a case in point. Fractured, it included young Germans exploring their country's recent history and feminists interested in representing women's social issues. The feminist filmmaking community was heavily biased towards realist documentary. With such a complex, contradictory initial reception context (not to mention the film's subsequent interpretation as hyperbolic camp or as a "joke on castration"), it seems that the "universe of ready-made feelings" to which Bourdieu refers is not so much universal as particularly relevant here to women (lesbians in particular) and queers.

FEMINIST CAMP AND FANTASY

Fantasy is a critical part of camp, and its mechanisms undergird *Madame X*'s outrageous gestures, characters, and objects. Laplanche and Pontalis famously defined "phantasies [as] still scripts of organised scenes which are capable of dramatization—usually in visual form."[44] Add sound and you've got cinema. Fantasy uses artifacts that are not usually the stuff of exotic or erotic play. Banal objects can become psychically charged, and their historical references awakened, when placed into these self-conscious scenarios. In that sense, fantasy shares camp's (and allegory's) reworking of familiar objects and ideas, loading extra representational and libidinal weight upon them.

An important definitional component of fantasy is that it is not the object of desire, but rather its support, a structure in which it is performed. As Lacan argued, the "subject participates in and restages a scenario [in fantasy] in which crucial questions about desire, knowledge, and identity can be posed and in which the subject can hold a number of identificatory positions." Fantasy, in this regard, " is not the object of desire but its setting." Objects are tools, not the things themselves, a point Leo Bersani and Ulysse Dutoit make when they write that "the objects of our desires are always substitutes for the objects of our desires."[45] And, as Teresa de Lauretis and

Elizabeth Cowie influentially argued, fantasy is a setting or staging of desire rather than an object-generated phenomenon.[46]

Madame X establishes that, although fantasies affect us personally, they are not so much individually produced or willed as they are derived from existing social, cultural, and historical material. They make stories, to be sure, but in unusual ways and with denaturalized figures like Ottinger's dwarves, robotic figureheads, and impossibly glamorous suicides. She describes Madame X, for instance, as "not a person, but a powerful double character. As the figurehead, it's clear that she's a mechanical doll, an apparatus of power. As the real Madame X, queen of the pirates, she gets around no less mechanically—a double presence of power."[47]

In the 1960s, Jean Baudrillard explained the West's reliance on surfaces in terms of fetishism. He wanted to wrest that word from psychoanalysis (the only place, he argued, where it was associated with lack) and return it to its etymological roots: to imitate by signs, to feign, fake. The lie of fetishism explains the object's fascinating hold over the subject, whose passion is generated not for the fetish-object itself, he argues, but for the *code*, the abstract system to which both subject and object are subordinated. Baudrillard turns to the body as the supreme example of a fetish-object built upon artifice, "Signs perfect the body into an object in which none of its real work (the work of the unconscious or psychic and social labor) can show through."[48]

Baudrillard warns that signs can psychically take over a referent, a process with real risks in historical representation. But along with the threat of replacing experiences or objects, fetishes also dramatize the irretrievability of the object or condition they designate. (And, of course, our desires and identities are intricately bound up in these "stand-ins.") The fetish is really a psychically heightened form of allegory, an enhanced object that disguises absences or deficiencies. In Marxism, the commodity-fetish is granted apparent magical powers (e.g., a fancy new car will improve your life), while the labor that went into its production is effaced. In psychoanalysis, the fetish is loaded with greater erotic allure since it veils the lacks and fissures that help constitute subjectivity, tempting us into believing that we have fuller access to power or to fulfilling our desires than we actually do. And since no discussion of the fetish is replete without reference to the phallus, the ultimate prop upon which conventional male power depends, we note that because the penis can imitate but never fully equal the phallus, it is a prop that can be detached from the male body. Its power as a prop for fantasy is infinitely displaceable onto any number of scenarios, bodies, or objects, as we saw in *Virgin Machine*. That mobility is important enough for Bersani and Dutoit to label the fetishist a "hero of

uncertain desire."[49] For de Lauretis, the female fetish gives lesbians a means to reinvest libidinally in the fantasmatic female body that, she notes, western culture would rather repress.[50]

FANTASY, CAMP, AND HISTORY

Both camp and fantasy showcase their objects and artifacts, and both prioritize exploration over aim. Camp-driven films like *Madame X* and *Virgin Machine* are not goal-driven, especially when compared to the strict mourning work of Syberberg and others. To say that camp lacks a goal, however, is not to say that camp and kitsch are historically unmotivated or meaningless—quite the contrary—but that their function in these queer German films goes beyond guilt and atonement by exploring fantasy and desire. As Elsaesser notes, films like *The Producers* (Brooks, 1967) and *Cabaret* (Fosse, 1972) were early camp responses to the German past precisely for having used history as a setting, establishing an open rapport "with history, sexuality, and the body."[51]

As "staged setting," fantasy is closely enmeshed not only with history but with cinema, one of fantasy's biggest social and representational technologies. Its screens are sites for fantasies to be projected onto and repeatedly replayed, what Cowie calls "public forms of fantasy." [52] This further contravenes the idea that fantasy is a private or volitional affair. And if neither fantasy nor history can attain its object, the impact of earlier events leaves remnants of ideas, desires, people, and objects in their wake. Those leftovers can signal their earlier presence and meanings, as well as point to new ones. Thus choosing which objects to use for staging and approaching history is crucial, for selection permits certain stories and desires to be articulated and others to be left behind.

Camp denaturalizes. Similarly, Anton Kaes has observed how *history* is not naturalized, particularly in Germany: "Hitler has become today, literally, *Hitler, a Film from Germany*,"[53] a figure so reproducible as to be political history's equivalent of the Mona Lisa. In Syberberg's film, he appears in a toga and rises from Wagner's tomb, *Sieg Heil*ing as if in imitation of Chaplin's imitation of *him* in *The Great Dictator* (1940); Ottinger's depiction of Madame X clearly borrows from Germany's "absolute tyrant." If it is impossible to naturalize Germany's past—whose horrific unrepresentability has been the source of so many debates—why not, as some argue, stage it at its most extreme and take it to campy limits?[54] Most critics, however, sweep camp's historical dimensions to the side, even if they have been happy to produce a variety of histories *of* camp. They tend

Hitler's campy return in *Our Hitler*

to consider camp in terms of unendurability and ephemerality due to its association with "fads," used-up commodities, ideals, or ideas that are quickly expended and expelled. That unfortunately leads them to read camp itself as socially disinterested, ahistorical, or, in Sontag's notorious pre-Stonewall phrase, apolitical. Sontag is not alone in this assertion. Two decades later, Mark Booth wrote: "One of the ways in which mankind progresses is by idealising the past and then attempting to recreate it. Camp employs a perversion of this process in which idealised versions of the past are recreated with the intention of being retrograde rather than progressive. Camp takes styles from the past and uses them to sidestep the onward march of history. The historical is reduced to ephemerality."[55]

For others writing more recently, camp is so "lost" to history that it no longer exists: its furtive quest for scraps, its impassioned ambivalence (for instance, to mainstream heterosexual culture), its unspoken ambiguities, and its reliance on hidden codes are practices many critics would rather consign to the realm of the closet.[56] For some, its purported frivolousness makes it simply inappropriate for gay communities coping with AIDS and HIV. In 1994, David Roman wrote that contemporary camp was a fleeting retreat into a "pre-AIDS moment."[57] For Philthee Ritz / Martin Worman,

former member of The Cockettes, camp's edgy "pastiche of every used-up myth, fable, and lie" ended up being co-opted and converted into mindless yearning for the past: "Among the other myths, we were also exploding nostalgia. . . . We never took the poses and ambience of another decade seriously; we were pointing up the absurdities. But in our wake, old clothes and old songs became ends in themselves. Nostalgia became an insidious tool used by mass marketers to cover up the shortages of spirit, imagination and raw materials in the post-Vietnam and post-Watergate bankruptcy."[58]

Ironically, such arguments are themselves beholden to a certain nostalgia, lamenting the passing of a purportedly authentic camp form. What "ruined" camp? Pamela Robertson argues that, given how widely camp is understood as a gay, male phenomenon, critics often blame some vaguely feminized force for pulling it from its edgy gay margins into the tainted (and again, feminized) spheres of consumer culture, postmodern play, or political fraudulence. Clearly, constructing camp as only a gay male phenomenon galvanizes these antinomies, which feminize popular consumer practices and masculinize the edgier, critical ones. It also feeds on the clichéd belief that only gay male culture is visible, or "out." Lesbianism is somehow tucked away in hard-to-find interior spaces of all-female clubs or feline-occupied homes.

Traditions that yoke femininity with theatricality, performance, decorative surface, adornment, and emotional intensity, while interesting, do not provide an adequate explanation to the gendering of camp. What are women's relationships to camp like? Camp to femininity? Why do female icons in male camp outnumber male ones in women's camp? Why are so many shared? Robertson argues that to ignore these questions implies not only a "one-way traffic" but one in which "women are camp but do not knowingly produce themselves as camp and, furthermore, do not even have access to a camp sensibility. Women, by this logic, are objects of camp and subject to it but are not camp subjects."[59] That idea takes form in the misogynist elements of some gay camp and its theoretical elaborations, among which the most astonishing remains Bersani's assertion that camp "lovingly assassinates" a certain form of femininity.[60]

Feminist scholars in the 1980s and early 1990s debated the "place" of camp in feminist practice, wondering whether gay male practices had erased either the term or its use-value to women. Since the mid-1990s, anticamp feminist positions have been nuanced or overturned by lesbian and feminist critics like Robertson, Carole Ann Tyler, and others, who explore women's place in camp as producers and consumers as well as its objects. Today, "women's camp" remains a contested term, but critics are finally exploring a wider variety of practices, like those that eschew misguided "as-

sassinations" and critique the status quo through other means.[61] What, for instance, of camp practices of people of color? Of non Euro-American cultures? Although it is beyond the scope of this study to provide those histories, we can see how the queer, female-directed camp in both Ottinger and Treut helps open the field of camp. It also helps widen the history of the New German Cinema by producing new histories.

FEMINIST CAMPS

Ever the good pirate, Ottinger raids heterosexual male cultures for her fetishes. Taking clichéd heroines like the housewife, the screen star, the half-clad native, Ottinger literally casts them into scenarios of female desires whose complicity with traditional male power Sabine Hake likens to "a central scene within Orientalism, a scene characterized by a similar excess of femininity and claustrophobic mise-en-scène: the harem."[62] (Robertson, for her part, describes Belcanto as an "inverted fag hag"; Hansen considers him a dandy.) Given that the fetishistic allure of the film's power-mad figures and clichés remains intact, it is not surprising that *Madame X* made its initial critics uncomfortable. For Ottinger's "perverse pleasures," to recall Elsaesser, involve domination as well as being dominated—one certainly risky to post-Nazi audiences, particularly in Germany. What made *Madame X* such a controversial film for 1970s feminists is that, instead of using fantasy to temper unpleasant political situations, it drew out these undesirable attributes and refused to de-eroticize them.

That refusal to indict unsanctioned objects is part of the process of disidentification already raised in this study. José Esteban Muñoz argues that disidentification involves appropriating the tacky, offensive mainstream depictions of lesbians, queer Latinos, and other minoritarian groups. As he puts it, disidentification is an "anti-normative option" that neither identifies with / assimilates these images nor rejects or counteridentifies against them. Instead, it is a third option that acknowledges both the allure and the undesirability of those representations to disenfranchised groups in a kind of collision of minoritarian identities and mainstream agendas. Muñoz writes that the "actual performativity" of B-grade icons and other over-the-top mainstream representations (such as B-actress Maria Montez, gaudy harem fantasies) "surpasses simple fetishization." Tacky oriental fantasies can become "rich anti-normative treasure troves of queer possibility," where pleasure, desire, anger, and political alternatives coexist. What is interesting is that Muñoz describes the negative representations that trigger disidentifactory practices as "toxic" or "once-

toxic" images, recalling the poisonous, abject qualities we tend to cast outward—or that homeopathic and melancholic practices bring inward. As if describing Ottinger's shipload of politically incorrect icons (with its own "gaudy harem fantasies"), Muñoz writes, "Disidentificatory difference [helps] toxic images expand and become more than quaint racisms."[63] Clearly disidentification is a form of appropriation/incorporation crucial to Ottinger's campy scenarios of lesbian and queer fantasies.

What do the rituals of Nazism and the conventions of the pirate movie have in common with camp? Generally, all are perceived as the domain of men. Ottinger's film—and queer minoritarian criticism like Muñoz's, twenty-five years later—thumbs that perspective. As Pamela Robertson argues, female-centered camp like *Madame X* offers a "parodic play between subject and object in which the female spectator laughs at and plays with her own image . . . distancing herself from her own image by making fun of, and out of, that image—without losing sight of the real power that image has over her."[64]

Once Madame X has summoned her icons and gathers them on board, she (and the film) fragments everything, reducing figures to abstract fetish parts and pieces. We see the materials, the props of which women's fantasy and adventures are made. Even the boat seems headed for a self-contained female community, not unlike the "queer havens" of Monika Treut's work. *Orlando*'s aimless, drifting ride highlights the indeterminacy of its movement and the floating desires and identities of its multigendered riders. Its voyage is rather different from Dorothee's. Dorothee's trajectory from Germany to San Francisco is clear: she moves from male heterosexual understandings of sex to queer, female-directed ones. That linear momentum is highlighted when Dorothee leaves image-fragments of her homeland behind as she bicycles forward. By contrast, Ottinger's *Ticket of No Return* and *Madame X* withhold a sense of progression or resolution. Like their adventurers, the films just wander about. In *Madame X*, not only are characters reincarnated at the film's end, but its narrative structure intimates the "relaunching" of another version, another boat ride, establishing that fantasy is transportable and not terminable. Could this be a comment on spectators' likely nomadic entries and reentries into the film's fantasy worlds? It certainly shows that fantasy *cannot* arrive at a conclusion, but can only be repeated with variations, just as desire ceases to exist if fulfilled—its aim simply is to reproduce itself. We may liken this to the nonlinear economy and serial structures of melancholia. Here, though, there is less an overt appeal to a listening or observing outsider than a comment on the allure of going to the cinema for its enticing sights and sounds, over and over again.

MOVING INTO HISTORY

The critics who consider camp to be marked by fads with no "serious" relation to history may be trying to strengthen their claims for the difficulty of defining it in the first place. Or perhaps they are trying to ward off the notions of immanence or authenticity that can be unwittingly (and ironically) invoked, as with the contention that "true" camp only existed before AIDS. Whatever their motivation, if camp were not a historical phenomenon, I believe that critics wouldn't be able to pronounce it dead or obsolete in the first place. Still, in spite of the many histories *of* camp, far less attention has been paid to camp as a form of historical representation, or to its historiographic assumptions. Critics like Kuzniar, Robertson, White, Timothy Corrigan, Richard Dyer, Gary Indiana, Johannes von Moltke, Bruce Williams, and others have begun to do this.

Significantly, all of these writers have turned to German film and to the New German Cinema for examples. In the Introduction, I mentioned von Moltke's essay on Hannah Schygulla.[65] He argues that her image and acting style fit comfortably within contemporary understandings of camp, an understanding inflected by Butler's contention that gender is established through a series of performative acts, and not as an inherent phenomenon. The instability of Schygulla's image corroborates his point. Is she a hack actress from the hinterland? Dietrich reincarnate? Decadent Hollywood glamour? Unattractive? Gorgeous? (That Schygulla posed some of these questions herself indicates the presence of camp's vaunted self-consciousness.) Schygulla's image, moreover, is closely bound to questions of national identity. She performs "Germanness," be it through characters like Maria Braun or Lili Marleen (national allegories themselves), through her relationship to Fassbinder (again, recalling von Sternberg and Dietrich), or as a result of her public reception (recall that a fan tells her, "You were wonderful as *Eva* Braun").[66] With films and reception doubly nationalizing Schygulla, one detects, as von Moltke does, how she might "represent the nation and its history as a drag performance put on by a particular body."[67]

Von Moltke goes on to develop Andrew Ross's claim that camp produces "surplus value from forgotten forms of labor" (Ross's example was Hollywood glamour). For the New German Cinema, however, one such "forgotten form" was the "labor of remembering and forgetting" Germany's war and postwar past.[68] Camp thus becomes a strategy of remembrance that differs appreciably from the "inability to mourn" asserted by the Mitscherlichs. Rather than commemorating the past through lamentation, camp's "mnemonics put not only the 'cult of Hollywoodiana' (Ross), but an abiding sense of spectacle and of performativity back into

the representation of German history," von Moltke notes.[69] In light of the elaborate displays and sophisticated historical inquiries of the New German Cinema at large, it is a fully convincing point. Moreover, given that it is effectively impossible to naturalize German history, camp's non-verisimilitudinous, performative styles offer a reasonable means of approaching it, as we have seen in relation to melodramatic, traumatic, and other stylistic strategies that draw attention to themselves and to their viewing and listening contexts.

Curiously, von Moltke minimizes camp's activity beyond American shores and comes close to saying that camp is a specifically American phenomenon.[70] This is partly a consequence of his choice of examples: Ross's work and his reference to " 'Hollywoodiana' "; filtering Fassbinder's cinema through Hollywood melodrama or through director John Waters's confession to secretly adoring the late German art director. Once touched by American reception, it would seem, as in the instance of Fassbinder by Waters, German films can return home as camp. Von Moltke characterizes domestic audiences of the New German Cinema as having stuck more or less to the films' literal, immediate referents, an observation that we saw made by historians like Eric Rentschler. "Von Praunheim's admiration for Tally Gown," von Moltke states, "provides a good example of a kind of German camp which picks up on figures and icons that have already been made over into camp in the United States."[71] Significantly, this is one of his few remarks on von Praunheim, one of the movement's campiest *Autoren*. And while there is no question about von Praunheim's savvy regarding U.S. camp figures,[72] von Moltke seriously underestimates the extent to which German and other non-U.S. artists have utilized their own cultures for camp purposes. In fact, some of his own observations demonstrate the fundamentally German nature of Fassbinder's campiness, such as the over-the-top spectacle of Nazi machinery in *Lili Marleen*, Schygulla's reincarnations of Dietrich, or the use of Wagner in Syberberg and Herzog. Von Moltke presents an interesting afterimage of the oft-cited fact that the New German Cinema itself was "created" on foreign shores, named by New York critics, and more welcomed abroad than at home. But it should be noted that even German-on-German camp generates no more sense of national cultural unity or interpretive truths than German-American-German camp processes might.

Rosa von Praunheim's *Anita: Dances of Vice* offers a prime example of how a queer, camp aesthetic operates within and outside of a German context. Important for our purposes is its soundtrack, which demonstrates in no uncertain terms that music can operate as a form of historically sensitive camp.

GERMAN FILM, GERMAN MUSIC, AND GERMAN QUEERS

As one of gay cinema's most outspoken participants, von Praunheim is about as out of the closet as you can be. Producing "home movies for the gay movement"[73] for over thirty years, von Praunheim is a key, and controversial, figure in gay German cinema and in German culture more generally. On German television, he has outed public figures in government and show business communities; his films have been denounced and boycotted by gays; he and Fassbinder openly aired their mutual dislike; his flare-ups with colleagues are as renowned as his flair for parties.

Von Praunheim's long reign as queen of gay German cinema makes evident how queer that cinema is, but I want to stress that German film history has never been *un*queer, historical limitations of the term "queer" notwithstanding. To be sure, queer authors, producers, and texts have shaped cinema cultures around the world, even if much of that influence was through censorship or displacement. In other words, whether as structuring absences or presences, same-sex "deviancies" have been played out even in the most repressive film histories, and in the most tediously straight systems. Again, this is true most anywhere, but with Germany, conventional histories and pedagogies have taken homoerotic films into account,[74] even if the films were not always apprehended as such. Texts such as *Mädchen in Uniform* (Leontine Sagen, 1931) and Fassbinder's *Fox and His Friends* hold significant places in German film history at large, as well as within lesbian and gay cultures, and in the formation of a queer German cinema, a point that signals the existence of concurrent histories, readings, and reception contexts. These films were not met with stable consensus or interpretative homogeneity as "gay," "not gay," "about" other things, and so forth. For years, *Mädchen* was primarily read as a treatise against authoritarianism or lambent fascism, until B. Ruby Rich's groundbreaking piece in 1981 helped pull its lesbianism center court.[75] Consider also the debate precipitated by *Fox and His Friends* among Bob Cant, Andrew Britton, and Richard Dyer, who objected to the film's use of homosexual lifestyle as a metaphor for economic exploitation. At the time, Fassbinder retorted that a film with gay characters should not have to be principally "about" gay themes.

Queer criticism has reshaped musicology as well. As I mentioned briefly in Chapter Four, some scholars maintain that insofar as tonality requires a stabilizing tonal center, and insofar that, as a system, it provides western culture with the sense of a musical "norm," it functions as a sort of heterosexual ground to homosexuality's "formal" deviances—excessive chromaticism, flourishes, weaknesses—which carry the threat to

undo tonal structure and its regulatory functions. This understanding propelled Susan McClary's analysis of *Carmen*, in which she notes that the musical chromaticism associated with the sexually "deviant" gypsy makes her undoing necessary on musical levels as well as on narrative ones.[76] Tonality, in a word, keeps things straight. Martin Scherzinger and Neville Hoad go even farther, finding queerness in *tonality* by tracing the historical coincidence of the term "inversion" in musicological and sexology discourses from 1860 to 1910. Characterized by increased chromaticism in art music and experimentation in atonal composition, this was also a time when men of same-sex desire moved from the category of "sodomite" to the less flexible one of "homosexual." As the authors observe, both discourses made appeals to "nature" and empirical evidence to support the ostensible naturalness of the musicological and sexual concepts undergoing change, and in both cases, inversion meant a possible overturning of the natural order of things. As Scherzinger and Hoad note, inversion suggests a *relaxation* of binarist thought, which, while not taken up in sexology, was not completely abandoned in musicology. They argue that harmonic dualism, in contrast to the harmonic monism that prevailed in the eighteenth century, opened up "two possible forms of harmony."[77] For sexologists of the time, "*inversion* thus functions as the concept-metaphor that challenged the unnatural basis of both the minor harmony and scale, and same-sex sexual desire. In effect, minor shifted from derivative, lamenting or frenzied to a phenomenon grounded in the natural undertone series, while same-sex desire shifted from the perverse, melancholic or eccentric to a natural inheritance—at least fleetingly—in these accounts."[78]

I will return below to the idea of sexuality taking residence in musical forms. What I like about Scherzinger and Hoad's work is that they find alternatives, otherness, and the "unwanted" *within* dominant form, and do that within a solid historical framework. I want now to look at how two other concepts, nation and national identity, have been used to produce gendered norms in music and film studies.

Let's start by way of the cinema. American-centeredness is structured into a great deal of introductory courses on film studies. Early on, students learn the rules of continuity editing, three-point lighting, generic stipulations, and how the studio system operated. Only after the parameters of classical Hollywood film have been established are other filmmaking practices introduced: documentary, independent, and experimental cinema; new media; filmmaking in Africa and Asia; film movements like the New German Cinema. Of course, cinema is not always taught this way, and teachers turn increasingly to global, cross-cultural perspectives. Neverthe-

less, the understanding of the entirety of non-Hollywood film practices as *responses* to classical U.S. cinema has a tenacious grip in the industry as well as in the classroom.

In musicology, Germany has enjoyed a parallel kind of center and privilege, although there too, postcolonial, transnational, third world, and queer scholars have been eroding it. As Philip Brett noted some time ago in a piece on Franz Schubert, western art music was the "serious," worthy object of academic scrutiny.[79] Outlining a traditional undergraduate plan of study, Brett wrote that students first follow courses in "musicianship and harmony" with material likely drawn from "the canon of German music (Bach to Brahms) towards which the syllabus generally leans. The acquisition of skill is dependent on the tacit understanding of the superiority of this repertory: it is here that the 'masterwork' ideology is first and most effectively instilled."[80] What Brett identifies as "Teutonic abstraction" is further emphasized, he argues, in the harmony course, "in which the chief ingredient is likely to be the four-part chorale settings of J. S. Bach." These compositional techniques are taught as standard, and not as the series of elaborations that they are (most of the hymns Bach adapted were based on folk tunes). "The stage is set," Brett continues, "for the enormities of the Schenker system, in which masterworks are, as it were, Bach chorales writ large.' "[81]

How does this involve gender? If German art music is the purported norm against which other music is measured, Teutonic culture can likewise be fictionalized as "straight," with only "other" musical cultures available for outing. That polarity might account for the openly recognized—read nonthreatening—homosexuality of a "decadent, effeminate" Russian composer like Tchaikovsky by western musicologists over the ages. Attempts to "out" Schubert, by contrast, have been treated as treasonous scandals. (The sexual aspects of composers' lives and music are usually relegated to quirky, inconsequential corners of individual biographies.) The ensuing binary model would have German musical culture occupying the space not only of aesthetic rigor and excellence, but of regulatory heterosexuality at its most virile and pure. "The central German canon," Brett explained, "must at all costs be preserved in its purity. The closeting of Schubert is of a similar order as the papering over of Wagner's anti-Semitism."[82] (A character in *Dr. Faustus* makes an interesting remark that both confirms and refutes Brett's observations about the Germanness of art music: "In Germany music enjoys that respect among the people which in France is given to literature; among us nobody is put off or embarrassed, uncomfortably impressed, or moved to disrespect or mockery by the fact that a man is a musician.")[83]

The case Brett made in 1994 may appear overstated today, since musicology has been redefining its objects of study within newer critical frameworks, especially in Britain and North America. Brett's binarist understandings of sexuality may appear outmoded as well. Yet, given the residual effects of what he identifies, it is worth interrogating the gendered, sexual, and national attributes of musicological norms he identifies. For this, we return to von Praunheim.

Anita: Dances with Vice is an exuberant repudiation of a "pure" national culture at musical and all sorts of other levels. Though specifically German in its choice of subject, it is a fundamentally impure text, boasting a compendium of references to international cultural productions: *Reefer Madness* (Louis Gasnier, 1936), the Ballet Russe, *Marat/Sade* (Peter Brook, 1966), Ingrid Meyser, Christopher Isherwood, Rosa Luxemburg, and 1980s AIDS activism. Like many of von Praunheim's films, *Anita* takes a documentary topic as its starting point and quickly veers off into spectacular play and fantasy. The documentary component centers on the historical figure Anita Berber (1899–1928), a nude dancer popular in Weimar-era Berlin. She was an important fixture on the cultural scene, sitting for a stunning portrait by Otto Dix, performing small roles in *Different from the Others* and *Dr. Mabuse* (Lang, 1922). For von Praunheim, Berber was "a symbol of the decadence, the perversity, and the bisexuality, and the drugs of her time. I like these exaggerated figures."[84] Like her character in the film, Berber, who died of tuberculosis at twenty-nine, would dedicate her dances to "vice, horror, and ecstasy."

Scenes depicting Berber's story manifest anything but typical documentary restraint. Portrayed in heavily expressionistic, vibrantly colored, and wildly choreographed sequences, they are conjured from the mind of an elderly woman (the late Lotte Huber) who was picked up in contemporary Berlin for exposing herself in public, claiming to be Berber. (She is identified as a Frau Kutowski near the film's end.) Institutionalized, this woman waltzes into doctors' appointments she takes for adoring media interviews, and chides fellow patient "Rosa Luxemburg": "*My* revolution is to smash all restraints!" The psychiatric institution of present-day Germany—the less documentary, more invented portion of the film—is shot in drab black and white, occupying a much less stylized space than the scenes of the character's "past." Anita's life is presented as a series of delirious stagings that highlight artifice and impression over depth or historical objectivity. Von Praunheim uses the same actors to portray characters in the film's two different time periods, and sometimes, as in the case of Anita Berber, uses two actors to portray a single character. The young Anita of the 1920s is performed chiefly by Ina Blum (of *Virgin Machine*), but

The two Anita Berbers in von Praunheim's *Anita: Dances of Vice.* Courtesy of Filmmuseum Berlin–Deutsche Kinemathek.

Huber portrays her as well. Blum also plays the part of the current-day hospital nurse who assists a rather lecherous doctor, played by Mikael Honesseau, who also portrays Berber's dance partner, Sebastian Droste. The multiple roles are more than an exercise in Brechtian epic theatre, [85] for they not only imply the subjective nature of Anita's story but also support the film's literal plays on identity and historical memory. In fact, the blurred roles go beyond the film, since in her own youth, Lotte Huber was a dancer whose career had been interrupted by Nazism.[86]

The fragmentation of the film's performances and cultural references is matched by its equally diversified, collage-like use of music. *Village Voice* critic J. Hoberman aptly described the score as "honkeytonk Schoenberg," with popular American jazz, Igor Stravinsky, and Kurt Weill helping to form its acoustic contours.[87] *Anita* is as brash musically as it is visually, as

brash as Anita herself is configured, and von Praunheim is not unaware of this: "I love music's murmurs, its breaks, and its extreme tones, like shrill bagpipes or violins, Chinese sopranos. I get a lot of satisfaction from the extraordinary because in it, I find interpretations of the ordinary."[88]

In its chaotic layers, the soundtrack militates against silence, suggesting that "Silence = Death," the slogan of AIDS activism, and the title of another film by von Praunheim. Early in *Anita*, Anita anguishes about "silence so loud that the eardrum explodes" in the hospital that by the end will be unable to "shut her up." In a way, the film's refusal of silence and acoustic decorum is a melancholic assertion. It is also a performance waged against the closet and other institutions that would try to regulate, medicalize, or remove disobedient desires.

This is not to say that *Anita*'s score works beyond *any* sense of norm or constraint. Indeed, much of its strength and originality derives precisely from working within (and upon) styles, movements, and compositional techniques associated with Germany, such as serial music, cabaret and music hall jazz, even 1950s and 1960s avant-garde work of composers like Krzysztof Penderecki. Rarely soothing or harmonious, music is pushed into the foreground as it accompanies otherwise silent scenes from Anita's "memory," an indicator of its importance in this stylized history. Coupled with the film's other self-conscious formal elements—most of which work to recall Berlin culture and Weimar-era cinema—the music participates in the text's larger camp strategies which, through their attention to surface, sound, and matter, establish a peculiarly *German* text as quite queer and *impure,* formally and morally speaking. Within such a framework, the score need not be read against the grain, as has often been the case in queer hermeneutics, in search of hidden traces: it is, in a real sense, already "out." Moreover, the film's aesthetic strategies show a sensitivity to history not usually associated with camp. This is important for contemporary viewers and listeners wanting to challenge the moral, physical, or mental "defectiveness" still associated, nearly a century after the Weimar era, with AIDS.

Once the elderly Anita is taken away for exposing her rear to a small crowd on Berlin's Kurfürstendamm, we see her strapped to a hospital bed under a circular neon light bestowing a strangely poignant halo over her. After a brief, synthetically produced sound, which is less like music than dripping water, piano music enters in the form of a clear quotation (Rachmaninoff, Prelude in C-sharp, op. 3, no. 2), just as a color "flashback" of the young Anita (Blum) is briefly intercut. After an injection of Thorazine and her complaints of whispering voices and silence, the older woman finally screams "Music!" and shots of her performance as the young Anita begin.

Both Huber and Blum's younger Anita(s) are dressed in red in the fantasy number, and various graphic matches connect the young Anita's movements in the color fantasy/history sequences with those of the older Anita's. The film sustains that pattern over the course of the film as it cuts between color sequences and the black-and-white portions taking place in contemporary Berlin.

There is still only a solo piano playing at this point, but the Rachmaninoff quotation has been replaced by desultory, atonal attacks. The piano here seems as isolated as the older woman first appears, and the unstable chords seem to provide a fitting acoustic accompaniment to the character's disjointed condition. Here *Anita*'s score seems to adhere to the classical Hollywood convention of providing parallelism by whatever means possible. It does this thematically, by appearing in the alienating hospital setting; formally, by having no clear organizing tonal center; graphically, with piano solo accompanying a lone character; and lastly, as a way to telescope the interior state of that character. Yet, when we consider music along with other formal elements, it becomes clear that the music functions on the *edges* of that scoring tradition, a tradition that, as Raben stressed, never had a German equivalent. For *Anita*'s evocation of possible insanity is quite different from Hollywood's depictions of the same. Before the 1950s, Hollywood scores tended to depict mental unsteadiness in isolated moments of anguish, yoking it to individualized characters, and not as part of an aesthetics of fragmentation sustained throughout an entire film.[89] Clichéd instrumentation, such as the theremin (*The Lost Weekend* [Wilder, 1945] and *Spellbound* [Hitchcock, 1945]), were used to convey characters' unstable episodes. *Anita,* by contrast, does not restrict that use of music to the hospital scene; it further violates classical precepts by making frequent, unexpected changes in the music over the course of the film. At the beginning of a sequence entitled "Nights at the El Dorado" (a famous gay bar in Berlin), the music moves from the soft violin solo of the preceding scene to a harsh, syncopated variation of a theme that had previously accompanied one of Anita's experimental dance performance-pieces. This cabaret-styled passage is in turn interrupted by a tango.

Anita's fractured memories, such as they are, are constituted largely by the dances she and her partner Droste perform. With little linearity, they follow the story of their careers, drug addiction, relationship, and deaths. The soundtrack is composed mainly in the style of popular music and art music of the time of Anita's story; particularly evident is the influence of Kurt Weill and the atonal experiments of art composers of the time. Importantly, the film does not use tone rows per se, even though Schoenberg had begun to develop his dodecaphonic system by the 1920s. Instead, it de-

ploys music reminiscent of the free atonality that characterized his earlier work and that of his pupils Berg and Webern. By selecting free atonality over the more systematic, dodecaphonic music—a formal looseness echoed in the film's choreography—von Praunheim highlights subjective impression over "objective," organized, normative presentation, historical as well as cinematic. "Free atonality," for music critic James Reel, "creates an atmosphere that is ephemeral, indeterminate, progressive, and antisocial insofar as it abolishes all the diatonic niceties that make the bourgeoisie comfortable with art music."[90]

With its glut of cultural references, *Anita* is a veritable grab bag of icons from World War I and the Weimar era: a man with a scarred face and a one-legged prostitute are right out of George Grosz or Alfred Döblin, and Ina Blum's large-eyed Anita matches Isherwood's descriptions of Sally Bowles. As Anita and Droste's story unspools, the film offers its own visual impersonations of Expressionist cinema. Cragged hand-lettered intertitles appear during the "silent" scenes-within-the-film, and even the opening credit sequence that is intercut with Anita's butt-baring scene is rendered that way. The film uses unexpected camera angles, distorted lines, violations of Renaissance perspective, stark contrasts in color intensity, painted sets, and unconventional light sources from above and below the figures. Characters are heavily made up, particularly with kohl around the eyes—causing one reviewer to call Mikael Honosseau (Droste) "a Cesare look-alike"[91] and another to refer to the "skull-headed" Honosseau as "a Conrad Veidt for the '80s."[92] In some ways, the film's performance/flashback sequences are reminiscent of Max Reinhardt's antinaturalist theatre, in which "poetic space" (perhaps the space of Anita's fanciful reminiscences) springs to life not through realistic portrayals but through gesture, lighting, and set design.

The tropes of German Expressionism accomplish several things. Most obviously, they set the stage for a story lifted from interwar and Weimar Republic Berlin and placed upon the figure of Anita Berber. At the same time, the authenticity of the past is gently mocked and camped up. Since these scenes are staged from the elder Anita's mind—whether as a consequence of the Thorazine injections she receives, psychotic dementia, or actual memory is left significantly unclear—the film's Expressionist packaging intensifies the subjectivity of the history it tells. This, of course, was exactly the aim of Expressionist aesthetics: to represent an idea from "inside" a character's head, a notion used to delirious effect in the infamous narrational frame of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. Expressionism's focus on subjectivity, though, should not be taken to indicate that an overesteemed, powerful individuality was at work. One need only consider the work of

Grosz, Döblin, or Murnau's *The Last Laugh*, with their stunted, disabled characters. As commentators are quick to point out, Expressionism gave form to a wide range of anxieties about modernity, rising urbanization, industrialism, changing gender roles, and the political, economic, and social instabilities of Germany from 1919 to 1933. Its interest in restoring the internal life of a figure or evoking an inner, latent truth was more an appeal to an imaginary sense of cohesiveness than to anything that subjectivities were actually capable of at the time.

For twenty-first-century viewers familiar with such dramatic Expressionistic flourishes, the effect is one of cliché rather than destabilization, a fact von Praunheim fully exploits through his campy aesthetic. At the same time, these cloying, familiar clichés abound with historical significance. For most of the film's camp effects are derived from icons of special importance to lesbian and gay subcultures, such as Berlin's queer cabarets and bisexual figures. Representation of gays, as Richard Dyer notes, "was part of the ambience of decadence in Weimar films" even at the time.[93]

Although *Anita*'s score helps establish that historical and temporal setting, it does not produce a coherent diegetic world, as it might in classical Hollywood practice. Here too it refuses that function, less by contradictory, contrapuntal relationships between music and image—as Eisler might advocate—than by sheer overload, with no dialogue in the past sequences and no overbearing narrative direction or aim to guide them. *Anita* takes great pains to present a disorderly compendium of aesthetic references. Certainly no authority is conferred upon the musical bits that are scattered throughout the film, pieces that are at best approximations of earlier styles, and rarely direct quotes per se.[94] In fact, the film is best described as a repository of the acoustic and visual detritus of post–World War I Berlin, an irreverent use and abuse of its clichés and codes. Not unlike the soundtracks of Kluge, von Praunheim obliges the musical meanings of his film be "filled in" through engaged listening.

Anita's evocation of war and *entre-guerre* cultures, while mostly national in focus, includes references to other national cultures, like the Ballet Russe. Closely tied to the Parisian art scene, the troupe appeared in Berlin in 1910 with their new ballet (Schumann's *Carnaval*), which featured dazzling sets by Leon Bakst. *Anita*'s set design is quite reminiscent of the tent-like curtains and the intense blues, reds, and golds favored by Bakst. Berber and Droste's dances move in seemingly indifference to the music, not unlike the dance-music relationship of the Ballet's 1912 production of Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*. In the only black-and-white sequence definitively set in the past, "O, Wonderful Land of Dreams . . . the Incredible Power of Opium," Droste actually plays a satyr-

like faun to Berber's maiden in the woods.[95] Nijinsky, whose choreographic career had just begun with *Prélude*, wanted to make the ballet "like a moving frieze, to animate Greek and Egyptian reliefs and Greek vase paintings."[96] Dancers moved from one static representation to the next in what Nijinsky called "stylized gesture," a phrase that might also describe *Anita*'s choreographic style. One scene in particular—Blum's first solo dance, performed mostly on the floor and intercut with matching shots of Huber in the hospital room—can only be described as a series of frieze-like poses.

Despite its now-secure place in the canon of European modernism, critics panned the Ballet Russe's production of *Prélude* for its purported moral and sexual degeneracy. This was a consequence less of the music than of Nijinsky's choreography and his performance as the faun, which included a scandalizing hand-to-crotch movement as he lay on a scarf at the conclusion of the ballet. Paris's *Le Figaro* ran a scalding front-page review, written by the editor himself: "This is neither a pretty pastoral nor a work of profound meaning. We are shown a lecherous faun, whose movements are filthy and bestial in their eroticism, and whose gestures are as crude as they are indecent. That is all. [It] was greeted with the booing it deserved."[97]

As if to court the invective initially hurled at the piece, *Anita* features a brief passage from the *Prélude* during a sexual encounter between Anita and another woman. (Significantly, this is one of its few overt musical quotations.) Anita and Droste's diegetic spectators seem quite happy to respond exactly as historical audiences had done to the piece. In a progression reminiscent of Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin* stories, Germans become less and less *offended* by what they see being performed and increasingly *offensive* and aggressive towards it. By the end, audience members are demanding Aryan purity in one form or another: one scene portrays several beer-swilling proto-Nazis—replete with German shepherd—pounding a table, demanding, "Folk dance, not nude dance"; dialogue titles appear: "Forbidden dances! Homosexual! Off with their heads! Exterminate them!" At this point, the film seems to adapt this perspective, projecting the purported decadence of Berber and Droste onto exotic, non-German sources. Berber's final—and apparently fatal—dance is "in the Orient," as an intertitle tells us, in front of Arab men unaccustomed to women dancing nude.[98]

What von Praunheim's film actually does is show the impossibility of the fantasy of national, sexual, or aesthetic purity. The German body, for instance, is given no integrity (the aging one-legged prostitute is the hit of Berlin's streets) and, as with Ottinger's and Treut's films, sexuality is remarkably free-floating—the cheeks of the heterosexual businessmen are every bit as rouged as Droste's. And while Droste and Berber perform

"vice," "horror," and "ecstasy," the film insists upon the equally decadent character of the bourgeois audience they are out to "shock." Audience members resemble small boars about to be roasted, with pale round faces flushed with drink. In portraying performers and audiences alike as androgynous and decadent, the film reveals the fiction of steady, untainted norms or identities existing anywhere.

A DELIRIOUS SPREAD OF SURFACES

However particular to early twentieth-century modernism *Anita*'s score might be, it constructs—in tandem with the film more generally—less a picture of historical authenticity than a delirious spread of surfaces, textures, and materials, something apparent in its treatment of body and movement. Here it is not so much the exact quotes and cultural citations that have relevance (is this Schoenberg or Webern? Sally Bowles or Lulu?) as the pieces, bodies, and fabrics out of which such references are built. The film luxuriates in the sheer physicality of this matter, with its rinky-dink pianos, crashing cymbals, drapes, kimonos, military uniforms, and cigarette holders all demonstrating the importance of form and surface to the film's erotics. In the sense that it emphasizes appearance over immanence and melds the trappings of different historical epochs, von Praunheim's project is quite postmodern. But his interest in camp and the gay and lesbian cultures from which it emerged proves to be the more significant ground for his exalted play of surfaces.

Camp's rich sense of display is exactly what von Praunheim is after. Just as Ottinger grids clichés of the pirate genre onto Germany's "fascinating fascism," *Anita* acknowledges the campiness of its historical artifacts, appropriating Weimar Republic icons of special interest to lesbian and gay cultures. The film is rife with androgynous and cross-dressed cabaret acts, the homoeroticism of the Ballet Russe, and hysterical heterosexuals. It deploys these references in a much more historically focused manner than the collection of "cast-offs and rejects" that Thomas Elsaesser identifies in Syberberg's *Our Hitler*, which appears to put the whole of modern German culture up for grabs.[99]

As opposed to the melancholic reverence with which Syberberg's *Hitler* surrounds the historical signifiers of German culture, von Praunheim treats them with affectionate disrespect. As the older Anita says—in a line repeated in reviews and promotion material for the film—"Berlin is the capital of sin and I am her queen" out to "shock" her world. It seems no accident that the most stylized moments of von Praunheim's film occur in

Anita's past, and *Anita* generously heaps the visual and acoustic clichés of Weimar culture on to these performance numbers. Stressing performativity over authenticity, Berber and Droste's numbers dramatize how the human bodies that pass through history are made up by it. Even the offstage scenes make the point, as we see when Berber's father abandons the family when she is a child. Played as mock-Victorian melodrama, with the requisite linguistic silence and indulgent gestures and music, fantasy is staged with props of earlier cultural traditions. Here, Huber portrays the young Anita with what seems an explicit nod to Bette Davis in *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?* (Aldrich, 1962), another camp icon raided for its resonance to gay and lesbian audiences.

AGAINST PRODUCTION

Anita refuses to tie its materiality of signs and icons to standard notions of production. Camp operates in much the same way—a practice of consumption or a form of (re)reading made possible only in consumer cultures: even its enthusiasm for bad "taste" raises the question of exaggerated consumption. By extension, critics put considerable emphasis on the place of failed or outmoded production when discussing how camp effects are produced. Consider the camp treatment of stars deemed past their prime, such as Marlene Dietrich's cameo in *Just a Gigolo* (Hemmings, 1979) or Davis in *Baby Jane*. What happens here is that the material facts of aging are inscribed on the once sexually (re?)productive body, whose age is made hideously overpresent, aggressively consuming.[100] Any number of critical discourses, both feminist and nonfeminist, continue to masculinize production (active, useful) and feminize consumption (passive, wasteful). The latter category would include "effeminate" men, those who "consume too much," minority cultures, and so forth. Western religious and economic structures sustain this duality, keeping production away from consumption, privileging the former ("work") over the latter ("waste"). This same opposition grounds homophobic understandings of homosexual and nongenital sex as always already perverse, since it fails to lead to "proper" reproductive output, a point Fuss underscores by describing homosexuality's function in classical psychoanalysis as an "essential waste ingredient."[101] Von Praunheim is keenly aware of the perversity of that bias—one need only recall the title of his earlier film: *Nicht der Homosexuelle ist pervers, sondern die Situation, in der er lebt / It Is Not the Homosexual That Is Perverse but the Society in Which He Lives* (1971).

"Lilli," the postwar goldigger

Other films of the New German Cinema both uphold and satirize this gendering of consumption and production. The greed for goods in Adenaurian Germany is allegorized through excessively heterosexual female consumers like Fassbinder's Maria Braun, Kluge's Lola, or even Anita G in *Yesterday Girl,* whose rare moments of economic security occur in the company of men. To be sure, those ironic, self-conscious "performances" of consumerism were cast some fifteen to thirty years after the postwar period. But it is striking that, immediately after the war, the sexualized gold digger became conflated with nation and capital in Germany's popular imagination. In the 1950s, for instance, a full-figured adult doll named "Lilli" hit the market. Initially taking the form of an animated figure in a cartoon in the *Bild Zeitung* in July 1952, Lilli—the doll—was made of hard plastic, with raised feet (for high heels), ice blond hair, harsh make-up, and stern facial features—save for strangely puckered lips that complemented her erotic wardrobe. A prototype for Mattel's Barbie (her domesticated, child-friendly American cousin), Lilli's role for Germans was clear: She

was the consummate postwar consumer, eager to make good *in* goods what the war had deprived her of.

So Lilli joins Hanna Schygulla (whom the doll's hair and make-up vaguely resemble) as Maria Braun, the postwar killer/capitalist, or as Lili Marleen, whose wartime allure staged Germanness at its most ambitious and erotic. [102] Thus, thanks to the reproductive erotics of capitalism, Germany could be allegorized as both eager consumer and slutty gold digger. But for all of the masculinization of production and feminization of consumption that Lilli evokes, it must be remembered that the doll was designed for the consumption and leisure of *men*.

Von Praunheim pushes the connection between female bodies and excessive consumption to its limits, and *Anita* boasts a dizzying array of nonproductive activities. Numerous items point to failed production or reproduction, such as newspaper ads for "suitable women wanted for experiments with male hormones." Images show consumption of all types: eating, sucking, drinking, and drug taking. The lines between production and consumption are so blurred that in the end, it seems that all that the young Anita can actually "produce" is her nudity. It is certainly not accidental that she dies of *consumption*. The older, self-appointed Anita is deemed similarly counterproductive with her useless fantasies. The sheer size of her body, with her self-proclaimed "big, beautiful ass," and her huge, made-up eyes (which can also be said to "take in" too much), align the character with an ostensibly out-of-control consumption.

The film inscribes disease, contagion, and addiction onto its campy, consuming bodies. Droste, for instance, is represented in one scene as a skeleton and Anita performs a blood-soaked dance in another. In the (just as stagy) offstage sequences of them at home, the two consume drugs and arrange for Anita to prostitute herself in order to acquire more. The elder, institutionalized Anita chants, "I live in ecstasy that gushes like a wave of blood," and blood does indeed gush from the young tubercular Anita during her last dance in the "Orient." Disease is equally present in the older Berber, although her illness is not in her body but "in her head" (and the institutional obsession with impure interiors is replicated by Anita's interest in assholes).[103]

Anita's character happily performs in the street as the "great nude star Anita Berber" and reveals the "most beautiful ass in all of Berlin" to the jeering crowd. The moment she begins to sing, "Whoever says ass / Has got to say hole," the police arrive to escort her away. Clearly it is not just her diegetic stripping that offends the law, but the hole upon which she insists and takes pride. For that is a body part that makes it difficult to demarcate (or police) interior from exterior, waste from production; it also

marks the limit point of reproductive sexuality. In fact, a discourse of anality operates throughout the entire film, primarily through Anita's dialogue: "Where do I find the shithouse?" she sings at one point. Elsewhere she recounts the story of a man who "shits into the purse of the baroness" to tell us that "No decent businessman will take shit for money." Later she philosophizes, "The world is an ass, and we are its farts. Each of us stinks in his own way—that is the spice of life."

This would appear to just be part of Anita's desire to shock the philistines, were the anus not such a crucial "part" of contemporary gay male criticism.[104] For our purposes here, Lee Edelman's rereading of the primal scene (Freud's Wolf Man case) is especially relevant. After noting the importance of retrospective, reconstructed memory in Freudian theory, in what he provocatively calls the "view from behind," Edelman explores Freud's ambivalence towards the primal scene, which

> as Freud [first] reconstructs the perspective of the infant at the moment he observes it, activates the pre-genital supposition "that sexual intercourse takes place at the anus." Thus in the first instance the primal scene is always perceived as sodomitical, and it specifically takes shape as a sodomitical scene between sexually undifferentiated partners, both of whom, phantasmatically at least, are believed to possess the phallus.[105]

Only later, in his "revisionary rearticulation," does Freud transform the Wolf Man's story into a heterosexual fantasy.[106] Edelman stresses how much this initial anal economy is "written over" in Freud's theoretical work. It is, of course, not only male homosexuality that psychoanalysis was interested in censoring, but the inability of the anus to confirm gender identity as well. Von Praunheim takes a more radical leap, locating the gay "asshole" on a campy *female* body,[107] rendering that anatomical part all the queerer.

Significantly, Anita's play with various dualisms of identity—sane/insane, young/aged, heterosexual/lesbian/bisexual, male/female, even dead/alive—is never "straightened out" for certain. In a sense, the film's parade of indeterminate identities implies the dissolution of identity itself. As Diana Fuss argues, identification "invokes phantoms" and is "open to a death encounter,"[108] as the conclusions of *Madame X* and *Ticket of No Return* dramatize. In *Anita*, death and decay are everywhere. As the institutionalized Anita states, "From every corner springs a hanged man . . . corpses embrace." It is not incidental that the Expressionist sets give no precise settings and frame their images in darkness, or that the characters dedicate their dances to "death and sexlessness," conduct mock hangings, and so forth. Accentuating this morbidity is an early dance of Droste and

Berber that the two perform separately but, one assumes, simultaneously. Droste's performance is intercut with black-and-white World War I footage. Dressed as a soldier, he regards a bullet wound in his abdomen. An intertitle announces "It's over!" and bass notes from a piano are performed slowly and solemnly (by contrast, each time there is a cut to war scenes, we hear loud attacks of brass instruments and a snare drum). A second, jazzier theme appears when Droste reveals his wounds. Played by saxophones, with their stereotypical connotations of sex, it produces a campy musical cliché.[109] Droste goes on to remake himself. Sporting garters and makeup and covering himself with powder—as if a thick veneer will hide his mortal wound—he aspires, via intertitles, "to be the most perverse of all!" like Divine, who wanted to be the "filthiest person alive" in *Pink Flamingos* (Waters, 1972).

As soon as Droste's wound appears in close-up, the film cuts to Anita's performance. She stands against a plain geometric backdrop, covering her white dress with blood, then smearing it over the rest of her body. Does this suggest *she* is the most perverse of all? The filthiest? Does she "embody" Germany like Maria Braun, and if so, which Germany and whose? Both of these performance scenes hyperbolize gendered, abject bodies, and wounds figure prominently in both. Yet no sex is obliged to bear the marks of abjection more than the other. In the move from wound to woman, for example, we hear incredibly gentle, soothing music—a theme used elsewhere in the film (as in the El Dorado nightclub scene), featuring trumpet over piano arabesques. While traditional film music scholars (and cinema's suture theorists) might argue that the music provides the illusion of cover and protection, I think the compassion it generates is even more significant here.

The film's exploration of death and vice is as attuned to audiences in the 1980s and 1990s as it is to 1920s Weimar culture, given the punitive discourses surrounding homosexuality and AIDS. A panel at the 1988 Berlin Film Festival, for instance, enabled critics (along with the director) to voice their criticism of mainstream cultures' inability to celebrate death. As Canadian Jay Scott wrote, ours is "a culture-wide abhorrence of sex on the one hand and a denial of the inevitability of death on the other."[110] When all is said and done, death represents alterity at its most challenging, a real "unwanted within the wanted," and so resonates in queer and other minoritarian cultures without any specific referencing of AIDS. Von Praunheim's refusal to shirk from death and negativity is apparent in a remark he made to an interviewer several years before: Death's "stiffness and immobility excite me."[111] Between Droste's skeleton, young Anita's deathbed, or the "corpse" of the older Anita, its depictions of death are physical and devoid of transcendence. Clearly, von Praunheim makes no

effort to uplift through sounds and images, but offers a kind of tempered celebration of the material "backside" of human and cultural identity.[112]

The film's emphasis on annihilation, negativism, and delirious consumption, along with its use of the historical past, is critical, and the selection of Weimar Berlin raises important, if conflicting, cultural and sexual issues. This is a period often constructed as a lesbian/gay utopia, given its relative—but by no means uncontested—social tolerance. From the actual clubs to the fictional Sally Bowles, its iconography has proved important to queer cultures. Yet *Anita* mediates this ephemeral utopia by the negativity on which it insists. Weimar Germany was, of course, marked by as many failures of leftist, alternative, and progressive activities as it was by successes. Even the considerable support for homosexual rights lent by Magnus Hirschfeld, founder of the Institute for Sexual Science (1919), was not unproblematic, particularly in his belief that homosexuality could be detected through concrete, measurable signs. Ultimately, the historical contexts of von Praunheim's film include not just that of Berlin between the wars, but less known histories, such as those of gay and lesbian cultures, neither "othering" them as separate, oppositional cultures nor assimilating them into one big melting pot of History.

QUEER SOUNDS

According to some critical musicologists, queerness may be reflected in forms of music that challenge tonality or its precepts. For others, it may be found in musicality *tout court*. On this point, Brett identifies the riddles and codes with which gay men are identified, like "[d]oes he sing in the choir?"[113] (In this light, the remark in *Dr. Faustus* about the naturalness with which German men are "musical" has delightfully queer resonance.) Lesbianism's connection to musicality converged with special force in the 1970s under the influence of French feminism, which hypothesized an *écriture feminine* of corporeal, nonlinear, musical qualities as opposed to linear, masculinist ones. More recently, Suzanne Cusick has written, "For some of us, it might be that the most intense and important way we express or enact identity through the circulation of physical pleasure is in musical activity, and that our 'sexual identity' might be 'musician' more than it is 'lesbian,' 'gay,' or 'straight.' "[114]

These kinds of claims usually focus on specific musical forms and, to a lesser extent, historical listening contexts in order to queer auditors' identities. In his monograph on Broadway musicals, for instance, D. A. Miller

argues that classical Broadway shows enabled gay and lesbian identifications by emphasizing perseverance and passion in the face of adversity, be this in story lines or musical numbers. For others, repetitious pop forms like techno, disco, and hip hop generate a space for queer and other disidentificatory responses. For some, it is opera; for others, it is Klezmer music, and for others, as we have noted, it is atonality. When all is said and done, however, queering music to this extent remains a vexed undertaking, and it is important to recognize that these claims require culturally and historically specific contexts to work at all. (It seems to me that the emergence of gay and lesbian activism and academics, coupled with politicians' ongoing witchhunt for degenerate music, have provided some of these contexts.) Nonetheless, theoretical objections may be raised against the idea that gay identity and musicality deviate from some fixed standard. Pitting music and homosexuality against a monolithic norm risks romanticizing both terms as outsiders: devalued victims on the one hand, precious differences to celebrate on the other.

Most of these queer articulations bank on music's abstractness and semiotic pliability (or, its *in*abilities). Clearly, if music "only points indirectly, if at all," it would perform an important role in the kind of queer allegory Kuzniar outlined. Adorno offers an unintentional example in a discussion of Schoenberg: "The dissonant chord, by comparison with consonance, is not only the more differentiated and progressive. . . . [I]t sounds as if it had not been completely subdued by the ordering principle of civilization."[115] Of course, queering Adorno's remarks does not get us past the binarist equivalencies drawn between tonality and heterosexuality, and atonality with queerness, that I want to put into question. It is finally the camp aesthetic *in* music that works to queer a text like *Anita*, and not "music" or "musicality" per se. Consider how the familiar signs of campy Berlin cabaret cultures are acoustic as well as visual, with their drinking songs, performed folksongs, experimental pieces, and so on. Its nondiegetic music is also clichéd: discordant pitches, loud, brief attacks, and weird instrumentation accompany moments of "shock," such as when Anita first exposes her breasts or when Droste proclaims himself "the most perverse of all." It is significant that these loud, brief attacks (Raben's Musik-Shocks?) occur in the absence of any diegetic audience, raising the question of where and *upon whom* to locate the "outrage" the music supposedly provokes. Here *Anita* outstrips its diegetic settings, as if to perform for us—whoever we might be.

SOUNDING OFF CAMP

Critics have always given musical examples of camp, although it has usually been the style or context of the performance that established its campiness rather than the music per se: a Busby Berkeley musical, ABBA, Swan Lake. Sontag acknowledged this in her few musical examples of camp: classical ballet, opera, pop music. But she makes a significant exception: "[C]oncert music, though, because it is contentless, is rarely Camp. It offers no opportunity, say, for a contrast between silly or extravagant content and rich form."[116] The observation is easy to refute: Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* (particularly the fetishized "Spring"); the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony; the opening of his Fifth; Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra,* to name just a few.[117] Sontag uncharacteristically bypasses the opportunity to explore the assumptions around such questionable notions as musical "contentlessness," and autonomy. *Anita,* by contrast, demonstrates that even the most abstract, absolute, "contentless" music is not immune to—and the metaphor is deliberate—cultural infection. The film's cliché-ridden campiness dilutes the myth of aesthetic purity and autonomy so prevalent in Western, and especially German, art music culture.

At the same time, the German "concert music" with which *Anita* tinkers is quite different than Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in *The Patriot, Maria Braun,* or even *Our Hitler.* Unlike these films, the musical traditions with which von Praunheim works are not primarily those of an official, German culture. Without understating the canonical status of Schoenberg, Berg, Webern, and other (Austrian) modernists in Germany, it is important to note that, unlike titans like Brahms, Beethoven, or Wagner, these composers never tapped the national imaginary with the intensity of their predecessors. In other words, atonal music, be it the dodecaphonic system or not, has never symbolized German nationhood in the way that Beethoven's or Wagner's has—although Schoenberg maintained that his own work did.[118] Popular judgment and official Nazi decree deemed it too abstract, too difficult (too undisciplined, too decadent, or too Jewish . . .) to achieve such iconic status.

German modernist music thus asks us to modify Philip Brett's observations on the German-centeredness of traditional musicology, for the excesses of this music have been overdetermined. It is at once too intellectual and too self-indulgent to be part of the musical norm Brett describes. Von Praunheim deliberately plays with this, placing German and Austrian "high" art music like Berg alongside non-German art composers like Debussy and Rachmaninoff. He proceeds to mix them with more popular, "lowbrow" forms like the music of beer taverns and Weimar cabarets,

American-influenced jazz, singalongs, or the music of Kurt Weill (which arguably blurs the categories of "low" and "high" altogether). No type of music in this film is left pure, or to recall Sontag, "contentless"; all is over the top, campy, derivative. That all share a certain decadence in the film is perversely confirmed by historical events that would soon condemn both avant-garde abstraction *and* American-influenced forms like jazz as inferior, foreign, or decadent, whether through "formal excesses," the non-Aryan status of the composer, or both. Nazi Germany was not alone in making these kinds of pronouncements (just as the critique of modernism was not restricted to the political right), and *Anita* offers a metonymic compression of the near-global retreat from modernism in the 1930s. (When the proto-Nazis yell "Folkdance, not Nudedance," they are making a demand for traditional folk culture over aesthetic experimentation.) German art music of the early twentieth century, for all of its purported excesses and indulgences, ends up being, ironically, lacking and ephemeral. Failing to uphold the virile, Western norm Brett locates in German music, *Anita*'s score demonstrates the instability of such norms to begin with.

It is worth returning briefly to the film's interest in disease and its institutionalization, since here too discourses of normalcy are played out with a certain fervor. (Moreover, because homophobic cultures have used AIDS as a go-ahead to pathologize homosexual bodies, the film's representations of disease and the body are timely.) Purportedly sick at a number of levels, Anita leads a literally colorful alternate life compared to the black-and-white setting of the hospital, whose repressive atmosphere is entirely devoid of energy—recall Anita's observation that "from every corner springs a hanged man" in her hospital room. Its uncampy lifelessness is conspicuously unhealthy (patients complain of shit, shitty food, shitty drugs, etc.), although this is the institution that defines the "mentally ill" and, ironically, exists to improve or stabilize their condition.

> Divas, like gay people, fall under the sign of the sick, the maimed, the deranged. The diva is associated with disease and with injuries that prevent adequate voice production . . . the produced voice is perceived to be a sort of sickness . . . because it is an exception to natural law. . . . Diva iconography casts the successful, prominent woman (the [large] woman who makes a large fee and a large sound) as a diseased anomaly. . . . Diva voice production is a scene of sickness, an occasion for the body to appear nonconforming, internal, festering, underground, and interrupted.[119]

Wayne Koestenbaum inadvertently describes the way women's bodies are treated in certain camp practices and discourse. One might say that camp relies on the iconography of disease as much as nineteenth-century

opera did, only camp produces grotesqueness and ridicule, as compared to the transcendence given ailing female characters in opera.[120] Yet von Praunheim's film, which recognizes that tradition, doesn't subscribe to it. It is not the aging, heavy Anita who falls victim to these deadly associations, for instance, but the young, conventionally beautiful one: it is she who dies of "consumption." It seems to me crucial that the elder Anita walks away from the hospital at the end of the film, for she does this not just as "a woman," or as the potential "female grotesque" (since she cannot be reduced to either of these things), but as an emblem for anyone affected by discourses of moral and somatic purity and disease. This, I believe, lets a lot of people "into" the text. Anita, as a character, succeeds in unsettling the terms of deviance and illness that surround her. Interestingly, Koestenbaum maintains that divas do the same thing:

> Singing, the diva interrupts our ideas of health, because what she produces is unnatural but also eerily beautiful. The diva . . . exposes *interiority*, the inside of a body and the inside of a self; we may feel that the world of the interior that the diva exposes is a diseased place [as the hospital and police do], but we learn from the diva's beautiful voice to treasure and solicit those operatic moments when suddenly interiority upstages exteriority, when an inner and oblique vision supplants external verity.[121]

Throughout von Praunheim's film, Anita offers precisely this kind of operatic, "oblique vision," staging fantasies that are and are not really her own. A crucial scene near the end reveals how what may be called an "inner vision" upstages the hospital reality, even if the latter shapes its parameters. Filmed in black-and-white, the body of the elderly Anita has been laid out on a chiffon-draped bed in an unclinical, private room. The scene quickly becomes a seduction fantasy involving Anita's nurse (Blum), who strips off her uniform to reveal a skin-tight evening dress. Vampire-like, the nurse attacks Anita. There can be no doubt about Nurse Blum's sadism here, yet Anita's desires are far too indeterminate to establish the sequence as a persecution fantasy—indeed, as the "corpse," how can we ascertain whose fantasy it is in the first place? Unlike the film's other fantasy sequences, this one is situated in the hospital, where there is a much stronger sense that Anita is reworking the reality around her. This particular fantasy seems to stage less a refuge from reality than an altered way of seeing, hearing, or doing business with it. Can this be how audiences use film to engage with history?

By casting Anita Berber's doctor and nurse in the two lead roles of her past, *Anita* blurs the distinction between what is deemed institutionally or ideologically healthy and what is decadent and ill. Anita's historical phan-

tasms, possibly initiated by pharmaceutical treatments, are less the expression of her inner vision or subjectivity than those of larger cultural forces and technologies—not the least of which are von Praunheim's ideas as a gay filmmaker. From her fantasies we can extrapolate how current ideological and perceptual dictates mold historical representation, and the film makes clear that an "objective" reportage of history is impossible. What Anita's "oblique vision" then asks us to do is to position ourselves in relation to two historically distinct, but not unrelated, contexts.

Anita concerns the 1920s and the 1980s, both "period[s] of conservatism, following liberalism," as Jay Scott wrote.[122] Von Praunheim describes the periods: "After World War I it was a wonderful time of the Avant-Garde. But they went too far. It's very similar to now [the late 1980s]. . . . People have swung to the right and they think we have to go back to the status quo and security. I feel out of style. My whole existence feels out of place at the moment, because people aren't interested in politics and revolutionary ideas."[123] Von Praunheim shares genuine affinities with the out-of-sync older Anita (and his admiration for performer Lotte Huber was equally clear, suggesting her role as his place-holder, not unlike that of Ottinger in *Madame X*). He knows the political importance of desire, and so in spite of his post 1970s disillusionment, adds, "I need to remind people now that we can keep on fighting even if the odds seem hopeless."[124] Given current obsessions with "improperly" sexed bodies, deviance, and disease, "it's very important to remember people [like Anita Berber] who had this kind of burning desire to try things out, to go to their very limits."[125]

Von Praunheim is obviously sensitive to the importance of his fictional Anita's versions of the past, with their open inquiry into desire and sexualities, in relation to theorists and activists working today. Like AIDS activism since the 1980s, the film exposes the hypocrisy of those who try to link physical disease with moral "impurities," or who lay proprietary claim to sexual and moral norms, projecting decadence onto others. Thus, even though the Third Reich is not overtly represented in the film, its phantoms reside in the hospital's "every corner" where "corpses embrace." Nazism took the fear of contagion as a medical and biological pretext with which to murder Jewish people, in order to control the *Judenpest*. In a cynical tautology, contagious diseases like typhoid and tuberculosis of course *did* break out as Jewish communities were forced into small ghettoes and deprived of sanitary living conditions, food, and medical supplies—a horrific example of "the unwanted within the wanted" when the unwanted were forcibly expelled, quarantined, and systematically killed. Quite by contrast, *Anita*'s diseased bodies and their supposed "lives not worth living" (as Nazi eugenicists put it) invite filmgoers to take them in, to embrace alter-

ity in its extreme physical forms, and to see how difference is actually produced from within.

The camp strategies of the film thus weave together historical concerns and sexual, moral, and musical norms. Where are they? How stable—or how German—are they? The film does not, nor could it, offer a full escape from these regulatory ideas or their cultural and institutional supports. The hospital, police, and the tuberculosis of Anita Berber, along with the psychosis of the elderly Anita, are all still there. But their ability to impose punishing, incarcerative subjectivities onto Anita is shown to be partial and perverse.

Von Praunheim literalizes the "rhetoric of hyperbolized negativity" associated with Weimar expression, forcing impurity and disease to their utmost conclusions through the interplay of medical, psychiatric, and camp discourses.[126] In its irreverent explorations of diseased negativity, *Anita* blurs the boundaries between present and past, documentary and fantasy, sane and ludic, objective and subjective, queer and nonqueer; it also shows how arbitrary these oppositions are. Its patchwork of aesthetic and cultural references, while wholly different from the elaborate compilation strategies of New German directors like Kluge, is no less historically sensitive. It simply proceeds from a queerer perspective, using camp as a means of signaling relationships among its elements. Queer filmmaking in Germany explores the messiness of borders, which perfectly describes *Anita*'s project. More than *Virgin Machine*, *Anita* raises national and historical issues as it theatricalizes gay and queer cultures, fantasies, and identities, blending different music together in ways that, while historically situated, strip it of any attendant myths of national or aesthetic purity. In its place, it extends that campy "messiness" and indeterminate "contamination." What this colorful, boisterous play finally offers is the more serious suggestion of bringing music and camp into the fold of queer culture, and into the realm of historical meaningfulness and pleasure.

6 Introjecting Kitsch

Werner Schroeter, Music, and Alterity

> Sickness itself can be a stimulant to life: only one has to be healthy enough for this stimulant.
>
> —FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

> Aestheticism is the product of times without hope, of states that kill hope.
>
> —HEINRICH MANN

> Kitsch is the element of evil in the value system of art.
>
> —HERMANN BROCH

What Nietzsche attempts to resurrect in the remark above is precisely the "killed-off hope" that Heinrich Mann militates against. In this chapter, I turn to an especially demeaned form of aestheticism—kitsch—which can offer not just a sense of "hope," but new ways for viewers of the New German Cinema to approach the past, particularly its less pleasant (and perhaps most removed) aspects. As the above quotes demonstrate, kitsch, as a form of aestheticism, is usually associated with unproductive decadence. We've already seen how queer German directors openly challenge that condemnation of decadence in their use of camp. For all of its excesses and breaches of taste, kitsch can effect an even more direct confrontation with and embrace of alterity and difference, especially in the hands of director Werner Schroeter. Schroeter's kitschy aesthetic has remained a constant throughout his film career, which began in the late 1960s, and in his theatre and opera work, where he has been especially active in recent years. His films include *Eike Katappa* (1969), *The Death of Maria Malibran*, *Willow Springs* (1973), *Flocons d'or* / *Golden Flakes* (1976), *Weisse Reisse* / *White Journey*

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(1976), *Neapolitanische Geschwister / Kingdom of Naples* (1978), *Palermo oder Wolfsburg* and *La répétition generale / The Rehearsal* (1980), *Day of Idiots, Malina* (1990), *Abfallproduckte der Liebe / Love's Debris* (1996), and *Deux/Two* (2002).

Schroeter's films receive accolades around the world. A recent Locarno film festival mounted a retrospective of his work; among his fans was Michel Foucault, with whom he had a published dialogue/interview. Yet Schroeter's films remain largely unavailable and often unknown, especially to contemporary audiences outside Germany. Even during the New German Cinema, he was never center court. As Timothy Corrigan notes, "Schroeter and his films have remained barely on the visible fringes of the cinematic family and historical movement which he, in many ways, helped to deliver."[1] In North America, the most widely known thing about him may well be Fassbinder's 1979 "Homage to Werner Schroeter," an essay in which the late director found Schroeter's influence everywhere, most infamously in Syberberg, whom Fassbinder attacked as a "merchant of plagiarism." In contrast to the internationally recognized Syberberg, he argued, the market had consigned Schroeter to the "underground," rendering his films "in a flash beautiful, but nonetheless exotic plants, ones blooming so far away [and] so strangely that in the end, one does not really have to deal with them at all."[2] It is a fitting kitschy description.

Schroeter has had difficulty even getting his films shown, especially before *The Death of Maria Malibran*, his most acclaimed work. Yet despite perpetual financing troubles and an infamous campaign mounted against him by conservative Bavarian politician Jozeph Straus, he has never been concerned about his marginality, moving nomadically from country to country for different projects and with different entourages. Schroeter is lackadaisical about marketing, and his films are notoriously hard to find. He shrugs off status as well as success. When asked about Syberberg in light of Fassbinder's attack, he simply laughed, "No, no comment. Really, there *is* no comment."[3] More pointedly, in 1972, when the New German Cinema was basking in its early success, he stated: "I have no intention whatsoever of playing a leading part [in the New German Cinema], and submit to the expectations of producing *Kulturscheisse* [literally, Culture-shit], even if it may be true that I carry around with me and into my films the past of this *Kulturscheisse.* I neither depend on it, nor do I admire it. The elements of this *Kultur* are the materials I play with."[4]

Schroeter's interest in playing with the dregs of the national body-culture is reminiscent of Kluge, although his scatological aspersions on the movement decidedly are not. The director's disinterest and detachment are more than just

quirky features of his personality, however. For this same disregard for success, approval, and good taste parallels a commonly asserted element of kitsch, which is that it exists outside established social and aesthetic orders, outside the realms of acceptable taste, severed from social, political, or even moral concerns. The irony with Schroeter is that while he may be personally detached (just as his films exist on the "fringes," to quote Corrigan, or "underground" for Fassbinder), his brand of kitsch *undoes* borders between center and margin, external and internal, oppositional and majoritarian. He does this by interweaving abject elements of German *Kulturscheisse* into German identity in historically informed ways, although he would certainly disavow such a reading.[5] Schroeter's brand of kitsch ultimately works as a form of homeopathic introjection, enmeshing the worst of the past with the present without guilt or nostalgia. In fact, he embraces kitsch and German *Kulturscheisse* with gusto, foregrounding the difficult, intense desires involved in the process. In a sense, Schroeter's films turn *Kulturscheisse* into tarnished gold.

Music, especially opera, is key to his alchemic project. Although many of the New German directors use opera in sophisticated ways (Straub/Huillet, Syberberg, Herzog, Kluge), nowhere is its connection more elaborate than with Schroeter. He differs from his colleagues in seizing its over-the-top, extreme elements. As Gary Indiana, one of the director's keenest observers, notes:

> Schroeter's use of opera is metaphoric and comically grandiose. He extracts scenes from overworked masterpieces as media for a richly allusive mental theater, runs bits and pieces together, jumbles the sublime with the ridiculous to the point of indissolubility, with the result that classical opera regains a bizarre vitality in this shredded, irreverent form. As it appears in Schroeter's first feature films, opera evokes not only a canon of musical works but also the modern perception of the operatic mentality as a species of camp.[6]

Not for nothing does Indiana use camp in describing the director's "radiant spectacles," to borrow Corrigan's formulation.[7] For Schroeter's films are filled with the sort of heavy-handed artifice, staginess, uprooted objects and quotes typical of camp. But again, Schroeter's style goes farther, producing "shredded, irreverent" work by appropriating particularly abject *Kulturscheisse* and historical debris. Significantly, that waste is taken not from minoritarian or "othered" arenas but from the kernel of high German culture. It is not a typical kind of kitsch.

This chapter, then, pursues the means by which Schroeter's embrace of kitsch, in all its abjection, is engaged. I look closely at an experimental film

Carla, Magdalena, and Mascha: Liszt kitsch at the beginning of Schroeter's *Bomber Pilot*

made for television, *The Bomber Pilot*, about his only work that uses Nazi and Adenauerian eras as historical backdrops. Schroeter repeatedly maintains that he does not make political films, and *Bomber Pilot*'s favorable reception by German leftists and intellectuals at the time left him (unsurprisingly) disinterested. Definitely not one of the director's favorites, it is perhaps an abject object choice from the start—for the director as well as for my readers, who are likely not have seen this hard-to-find gem. Political setting aside, however, *Bomber Pilot* upholds the stylized, experimental form for which Schroeter is known, conveying emotional states with stagy intensity and with heavy dollops of European opera. More importantly for my purposes, *Bomber Pilot* exposes the deleterious aspects of Nazi kitsch and manipulates them as a homeopathic "working-through" that has music function as a vehicle of almost pure emotion. At the same time, its hyper-kitschy style makes impossible the predictable emotional responses and facile identifications that most people associate with kitsch. And more than any other film discussed here, I believe it opens up the possibility of the "supportive social space" Santner identified as essential for homeopathic healing. *Bomber Pilot,* I believe, introjects rather than projects or rejects the less desirable artifacts of Germany's past and literally gives voice

to the ineffable desires and emotions involved in confronting these difficult pasts and objects. Before considering how these ideas are worked out in Schroeter's work, I turn to a brief discussion of kitsch.

THE OUTSIDER: TRASH, NINETEENTH-CENTURY ROMANTICISM, AND KITSCH

With its Yiddish etymology, "kitsch" immediately suggests ethnic difference and alterity to white Germanic norms.[8] Ludwig Giesz attributes it to *verkitschen* (to cheapen), and takes it from *den Strassenschlamm zusammenscharren*, literally "to collect rubbish from the street," a point confirmed by other critics, who locate its origins in a form of street-sweeping or pilfering.[9] According to Peter Ward, established art critics first used it in turn-of-the-century Vienna (a book called *Der Kitsch* was published by an Austrian art critic in 1925); to *verkitschen etwas* meant to cheapen an object or knock it off quickly.[10] Trash, debris, and expelled matter are indispensable not just to the definition of kitsch, but to its status as a concept and aesthetic category. Since it trades in rubbish, kitsch has been more or less removed from the domain of "pure" aesthetics, just as its ethnic etymological associations might be said to taint it. Needless to say, such presumed purity is highly suspect, especially when considered as a stable, fixed category. Kitsch's tainted qualities are, in fact, surprisingly mobile. Its current association with—among other things—bad taste, exalted taste, the lower class, the upper class, urban cultures, rural cultures, gays, lesbians, queers, and straights demonstrates how historically variable the construction of abject "otherness" actually is.

Still, this has not stopped critics and scholars from debasing kitsch. One often hears that kitsch occupies a hyperbolized position of art for art's sake, for instance, leading some to argue for its purported obliviousness to and disengagement from historical and cultural context. Of course, that aesthetic autonomy has nothing to do with the treasured functionlessness of Kantian art, nor the critical, counterhegemonic potential in Adorno's aesthetics, even though it remains stubbornly suggestive of both. For most commentators, kitsch nearly constitutes a category unto itself, so beyond the pale of aesthetic value and moral and ethical respectability is it. For instance, in *Kitsch and Art*, Tomas Kulka argues that kitsch cannot even be considered *bad art*, since the latter reflects poor ability rather than an out-and-out breach of aesthetic value.[11] Kulka's position is heavily influenced by the work of novelist Hermann Broch, who wrote, using a provocative somatic metaphor: "Kitsch is certainly not 'bad art'; it forms its own closed system, which is *lodged like*

a foreign body in the overall system of art, or which, if you prefer, appears alongside it."[12] Existing both inside and out, like Kluge's "unwanted within the wanted," kitsch is clearly necessary to sustain these evaluative categories. At the same time, it constantly threatens them with the possibility of undoing their boundaries. Hence Broch's desire to keep kitsch at bay, to project and externalize it so as not to "lodge" it in the body of mainstream aesthetics. Thus critics reinforce (and overdetermine) kitsch's outsider, pariah-like status through recourse to social, aesthetic, and even somatic argumentation. Why? To bolster the fantasy that our bodies and subjectivities—now impervious to shock—still have the option of "protecting" ourselves from undesired entities by refusing introjection.

One thing that critics agree on: kitsch, like its only slightly more esteemed cousin, camp, came into being in mid- to late nineteenth-century European culture, when mass-produced production, commodity accumulation, and display were skyrocketing (recall Kluge's searing presentation of the Crystal Palace). The period's expanding trade venues and general consumerism found their match in the increasingly elaborate style of its artifacts, its penchant for ornate, gratuitous objects, and movements like Art Nouveau. Functions, purpose, conclusions, and totalities mattered less, it seemed, than the beautiful detail. Kitsch is remarkably well suited to this context, and not just for its orientation towards the flourish. A form of production gone amok, kitsch is either too much (commodity clutter) or too little, too remote, or too out-of-touch (as with rural crafts or bad souvenirs). A form of counterproduction, it generates horribly useless objects, and is unsuitable to standard capitalist or heterosexual notions of production or reproduction. In this way kitsch may challenge our need to assign objects specified functions, or to have them participate as part of a whole, lead to a conclusion, or have, in short, any purpose or meaning.

Perceiving kitsch as a refuge from social, economic, and ideological contexts is just that—a perception, not a material reality. "Functionlessness" is a function critics ascribe to aesthetics, and it is sustained by a variety of philosophical, aesthetic, and economic institutions. Pierre Bourdieu described this brand of aesthetics as one that "presupposes [its own] distance from the world . . . which is the basis of the bourgeois experience of the world."[13] Kitsch takes that dominant, middle-class function and runs with it, something Clement Greenberg famously observed when calling kitsch "the culture of the masses,"[14] appealing to the lowest common denominator, which Greenberg tied to realism. Given its resemblance to conventional notions of art, it is hardly surprising that commentators work overtime to assert kitsch's lack of taste and productivity so as to resituate those qualities elsewhere, for instance, in "high," heterosexualized, white, wealthy art. In

this light, it is easy to see how the visceral reactions to "bad taste" (terms provocatively suggestive of bodily sensation) may thus be considered as a form of "pure" taste: "Bad taste is real taste, of course, and good taste is the residue of someone else's privilege."[15] Bourdieu supports this assertion, noting that when people have to justify their tastes, they usually assert them negatively, by repudiating the tastes or mores of others.

Although Strauss's waltzes offer an obvious example of kitsch, we might turn to serial music, which flourished at about the same time in Europe. At this historical moment, serial and atonal music, kitsch, and decadent aesthetics held a number of shared assumptions about textual production, structure, and representation. All relied on metonymic over metaphoric organization; all rejected linear or progressive structure; and all valued fragmentation and accumulation over the sense of organic gestalt or completion. This is evident outside of music in novels like Huysmans's *A rebours* / *Against Nature* and in the essays of Oscar Wilde.[16] Rational but not rationalized, serial music and kitsch emblematize a mode of production that differs from a hierarchical assembly line of meaning. Denouement does not really matter; goallessness prevails. That goallessness, in fact, helps distinguish kitsch and camp from parody, whose intent is clear-cut, its meanings comparatively fixed. Similarly, desire in these late nineteenth-century aesthetic systems became overtly, unabashedly unfulfillable. For the Decadents, it was not even legally expressible, projected instead onto sets of objects that would never end, much less satisfy.[17] Importantly, this prompted cultural producers not to feel alienated from these objects so much as eroticize or enhance their value. As Wilde writes, "Difference of object does not alter singleness of passion. It merely intensifies it."[18]

The minutely detailed bourgeois homes of the mid- to late nineteenth century revealed a certain fear of the void. Benjamin noted the period's obsession with wrappings, linings, casings, facades, and ornamentalism, observing that "'kitsch' [functioned as] the cluttered, aesthetic style of this mass marketing, as bourgeois class guilt: 'the overproduction of commodities; the bad conscience of the producers.' "[19] As I noted in relation to Kluge, this European period was also fully in thrall to ethnic alterity in the mutually entangled realms of politics (colonization), economics (trade, tourism), and aesthetic and leisure forms (opera). Viewed this way, kitsch may have functioned at the time as a way of managing alterity through domesticated exoticism.[20] As Arthur Koestler argues, Victorian kitsch was both a false cover *of* and an ironic response *to* the bald facts of industrialization and colonialism; the irony, he maintains, was in denying "modern man's" relationships to his others, be they Darwin's primates, colonized peoples, or the "law of the jungle." He asks "how it was possible that in the

age of imperialist conquest, when human purposes [were] defined by the concepts of the Survival of the Fittest and the Struggle for Existence, people surrounded themselves with velvet, plush, and knick-knacks on the imitation-marble mantelpiece, how art could become so completely separated from reality?"[21]

Understanding nineteenth-century European culture as a garish meeting ground of capital and colonial expansionism, and as a dress rehearsal for the cinema, gives kitsch very precise historical origins. At the same time, the *denial* of kitsch's historicity is pivotal to its very historicization and is asserted in most definitions and understandings of the term. It is evident in Koestler's remark that art more generally could be "completely separated from reality." Kitsch takes that disinterested, detached function and goes further, mangling historical perspective so that advertisements can show Michelangelo's David hawking cheap wristwatches on his raised arm.

Yet critics keep returning to the late nineteenth century, correctly connecting kitsch to the aesthetic ideology of Romanticism, in whose twilight it ascended. Matei Calinescu influentially called it a "hackneyed form of romanticism";[22] for Saul Friedlander, "Kitsch emotion represents a certain kind of simplified, degraded, insipid, but all the more insinuating Romanticism."[23] Commentators are generally careful to avoid claiming that Romanticism *is* kitsch, preferring more delicate phrases, such as having given birth to kitsch—but the link is nonetheless solid. For all the historical roots Romanticism gives kitsch, though, it is important to acknowledge Romanticism's own investment in universalism and timelessness—in short, in ahistoricity.

KITSCH AND CAMP

If a central concern of camp is the construction of psychic and socio-sexual identities (as in its send-ups of white heterosexuality), kitsch, by contrast, functions more as a consequence of economic and social structures, without which the categories of taste and tastelessness would be impossible in the first place. Camp may be "failed seriousness," to invoke Sontag, but kitsch is failed judgment. Where camp is childish, kitsch is an irresponsible adult. It should "know better" and so is tied to a sense of *inappropriateness* that exceeds taste or decorum, trespassing moral and ethical terrain (this is especially clear in debates surrounding representation and the Shoah). Even Brecht stated, "There are effective films that have an impact on people who *see* them as kitsch, but there are no effective films *made* by people who see

them as kitsch."[24] By falling outside the parameters of quality, awareness, and productivity, kitsch becomes an even more degraded term than camp.

Indeed, kitsch is rarely valued in anyone's scheme. Even queer commentators keep it at a distance, as if its proximity endangered the precarious status of camp or gay and lesbian cultures *tout court*. That is frequently achieved by constructing it as the antagonist to camp's more playful, "affectionate" send-ups. Sontag, for instance, referred to camp as "a kind of love," the absence of which is "why such kitsch items as *Peyton Place* . . . aren't Camp."[25] More recently, a reader of *Esquire* wrote, "Straight people don't have camp, they have kitsch,"[26] relegating it to the trash bin of heterosexuals. One term of opprobrium that critics constantly evoke is kitsch's investment in sentimentality—a feeling, of course, but not one of love. For them, sentimentality can be automatically rigged and triggered; it engages exaggerated, scripted reactions to things that are vicariously experienced. It is unearned emotion, in short. This leads to the claim that kitsch evinces predictable "stock emotions."[27] One can only deduce that sentimentality in this scheme is somehow mass-produced, whereas "authentic" feelings are the mark of (pre-industrial?) individualization. Others tie kitsch's sentimentality to nostalgia, which in turn suggests a problematic, emotional reaction to history. Whether a surfeit of emotionalism and lack of control, sentimentality has been roundly feminized, a point I develop below. And even though sentimentality has proven enormously lucrative for Hollywood and other industries trading in the "marketplace of emotions," it is still considered a very cheap feeling indeed.

Examining its etymology, Eve Sedgwick draws connections between sentimentality and the French verb *ressentir*, to feel (usually negative) emotions intensely; the standard English translation of the noun form is *resentment*. There is also *sentir*, "to smell," and *se sentir*, "to feel" in the physical sense ("I feel sick today"). All of these words chart a clear course between body, emotion, and disgust, a physicality that intimates anxiety over alterity and contagion. As Sedgwick notes, *ressentir* has been linked to "[t]he prurient; the morbid; the wishful; the snobbish . . . nauseating."[28] Sentimentality seems to be dangerously counterproductive; its historical associations have been "located in the private or domestic realm, [where it] has only a tacit or indirect connection with the economic facts of industrial marketplace production . . . and is intensively occupied with relational and emotional labor and expression."[29] Such perceptions only deepen the inscription of femininity on sentimentality, recalling Kluge, for whom feminine production was largely a matter of familial, biological reproduction. How to appropriate these terms? As Sedgwick observed, feminists began

the process of what she calls "rehabilitating" sentimentality during the 1980s; she argued that gay men should be doing the same thing, since they'd been devalued through the same associative tropes.

When Sedgwick goes on to distinguish kitsch from camp, however, familiar antinomies and judgments emerge. Kitsch becomes a matter of "attribution," judgment, ridicule, and *projection*, turning its consumers into either victims or victimizers. There are the manipulated and "unenlightened" on the one hand, and the cynical and "transcendent" on the other.[30] She argues that camp, by contrast, is friendly and "more spacious": "Unlike kitsch-*attribution*, the sensibility of camp-*recognition* always sees that it is dealing in reader relations and in projective fantasy . . . about the spaces and practices of cultural production. Generous because it acknowledges (unlike kitsch) that its perceptions are necessarily also creations, it's little wonder that camp can encompass effects of great delicacy and power in our highly sentimental-attributive culture."[31]

My objection to Sedgwick's analysis is that the process of "recognition" she describes shuts out difference and reproduces sameness, sustaining the very culture of attribution she criticizes. Recognition runs the risk of closing down relational possibilities and in the long run may in fact be *less* "spacious" than kitsch—although not kitsch as defined in her terms, to be sure. How to undo a tradition that imposes pejorative unawareness (or, at the other extreme, cynical abuse) onto "kitsch" and, on the other hand, savvy appreciation of artifice onto "camp"?

Schroeter eschews this duality by finding undesirable alterity and difference within. In the sense in which the term is usually used, his is a queerer approach. This is not to say that kitsch, or even Schroeter's brand of it, *is* queer. Rather, it is to argue that kitsch may be every bit as "knowing" as camp and in this way can be useful to queer, lesbian, and gay constituencies. Given that empowered, majoritarian groups and institutions project negative features onto others whom they would like to degrade, the outsider status of camp, and especially kitsch, needs to be taken into account. Schroeter, for his part, explicitly refuses to buy into kitsch's averred "lovelessness." Instead, the overwrought performative, visual, and acoustic presentations in his films captures what Elsaesser calls an authenticity of feeling. This is not the feeling of sentimentality, but rather a feeling that can only be specified through its intensity, or perhaps as intensity itself. It is emotion without source and without goal.

KITSCH THROUGH THE CLASSES

Given that kitsch is usually aligned with a lack of awareness, education, urbanity, or sophistication, "low-end" examples are easy to name: the range extends from velvet Elvis paintings to plastic cuckoo clocks. One of its interesting complexities, however, is how kitsch incorporates these sorts of objects *as well as* those of purportedly refined, upscale "tastes" and socioeconomic prestige, like opera, baroque architecture, and big fountains. Kitsch is an affectation of extremes, upsetting bourgeois tastes by being either too pedestrian or too aristocratic.

Its connection to opera is especially deep, important here since Schroeter's kitsch is unfathomable without it. Of course, opera has lost much of its elite pedigree and prestige, even in Europe. Its insular, protected status is gone—it may still attract the fur coats in Berlin or London, but activists are there to throw blood on them. And as I have shown, critics like Kluge, Clément, and Potter have grown more aware of the blood*letting* of this particular leisure form.

In contrast to these critics, Schroeter is relatively unconcerned with the deadliness of opera's stories (although only relatively). He gravitates to the materials that convey these stories, opera's exquisite sounds and styles. His soundtracks repeatedly come back to the nineteenth-century world of *haut bourgeois* Europe, the twilight of late German Romanticism and the beginning of kitsch culture. Critics (most influentially, Corrigan) frequently refer to his film aesthetic as operatic[32] for its stylistic and emotional excesses. Schroeter's use of operas, opera cultures, and especially, diva cultures has led some to argue for "an obvious example of a gay encoding." Ulrike Sieglohr maintains that in his work, "male homosexuality remains a subtext within an aesthetic sensibility and thematic encoding." She quotes Karsten Witte's reference to Schroeter's "homosexual aesthetic," which is achieved through "hidden signs and signals—allusions and secret figures . . . insisting it is from a gay perspective that one understands [his] encoding as an aesthetic counter-strategy."[33] While I do not agree that these inscriptions codify "gayness," I agree that his work produces a "counterstrategy" that suggests the queer allegory Kuzniar theorized, a disidentificatory appropriation of operatic culture.

In *The Death of Maria Malibran,* for instance, the opera singer is such a pivotal force that she spills over onto several figures at once. All of the central actors (Magdalena Montezuma, Christine Kaufmann, and Candy Darling) portray the early nineteenth-century diva, who is voiced through recordings or impersonations of twentieth-century divas like Maria Callas and Janis

Schroeter's *The Death of Maria Malibran*. Courtesy of Museum of Modern Art Film Stills Archives.

Joplin. La Malibran elicited powerful desires in her own time, and Schroeter uses her legendary iconicity as a prefiguration of Callas's. His career-long fascination with divas (Callas in particular) separates Schroeter from fellow opera enthusiast Kluge, not merely for the queer sensibilities it intimates, but for the star system and fetishism that Kluge abhors. In places where Kluge found tragedy and alienation, Schroeter sees goofy kitsch and beauty.

Critics have been understandably drawn to comment on Schroeter's high-end kitsch. Gary Indiana contrasts the purported "elitism" of his cultural references with the working-class milieux of Fassbinder films, writing that, "Schroeter's [films] move through the decors of high culture like omnivorous tourists."[34] What Indiana intimates here is that Schroeter's films—and their viewers and listeners—are less *of* that elite world than visitors, familiar but not identified with it. They are thereby separate from its privilege and power, even if they are still entranced by it. It is another example of disidentification in his work, as opposed to the simpler, resemblance-based forms of identification Sedgwick aligns with camp. This suggests that kitsch can be more generous and "spacious" than Sedgwick maintains, and that Schroeter's "elitism" might have a potentially critical edge.

KITSCH AND FASCISM

It goes without saying that kitsch is not always historically instructive, nor is it of constant significance to queer and gay cultures. With a variety of consumption contexts and audiences, it fulfills any number of different functions, as two film examples dramatize. One of mainstream cinema's more delightful kitsch sequences is Charlie Chaplin's balletic dance with the balloon globe in *The Great Dictator*. The sequence is famous for its total absence of dialogue; we hear nothing but Wagner's *Lohengrin*.[35] Chaplin's music, props, and performance give the "blood and soil" nobility Wagner exemplified for Hitler a ridiculous levity, while also pointing to its diabolical nature. The scene succeeds not out of any postwar, retrospective camping of the composer, but for demonstrating the vicious kitsch of Nazism's Wagner fetish in the first place.

A couple of years ago on "The Rosie O'Donnell Show," the recent American talk show, O'Donnell gave her guest, Roberto Benigni, a hat once worn by Chaplin—she knew Benigni was "a big fan." Moved, he said he "didn't deserve it." He was probably right, particularly if one compares Chaplin's depiction of fascism with Benigni's *Life Is Beautiful*, the Oscar-gilded film that, as the title impresses upon us, is a "beautiful" film (as opposed, say, to a historical one), a squishy celebration of the human spirit. In his insightful critique, Jim Hoberman discusses *Beautiful*'s self-proclaimed status as "fable."[36] With the precedent set by *Schindler's List* (Spielberg, 1993), Hoberman notes that the "Holocaust is now ancient history—the stuff of myth. Imagine a 'simple fable' of paternal self-sacrifice set in a Serbian concentration camp or in the killing fields of Rwanda. Had Benigni done so, he would have had a more difficult time calling his comedy *Life Is Beautiful*—let alone getting audiences to sit for it."[37]

Years earlier, Saul Friedlander had even more vigorously challenged the transformation of modernity's most brutal era into myth. His 1982 *Reflections on Nazism* was a crucial intervention in debates surrounding Nazi-retro films popular at the time, among them German films like *Our Hitler* and *Lili Marleen*, which, together with literary examples, constituted what he called the "new discourse" of Nazism. In them Friedlander located strategies of disavowal that masked atrocities of the Nazi past precisely *as* they were depicting and, ostensibly, exposing that past. He maintained that they achieved this by encouraging a "fascinating fascism," either through eroticism (*The Night Porter* [Cavani, 1973]) or banality (sequences of *Our Hitler* painstakingly detailing Hitler's daily life, which stress the ordinariness of the monster).

Even with well-intentioned films that insisted on the ongoing legacy of fascism in contemporary Europe, like *The Spider's Stratagem* (Bertolucci, 1970), Friedlander finds that their spectacularization—or, inversely, their banalization—of fascism mirrors fascism's particular brand of kitsch, a kitsch Friedlander ultimately links to death. Thus, in contrast to critics who regard kitsch as functionless or cheap failure, Friedlander stresses its very costly dangers in representing something as murderous as Nazism. For him, its tastelessness and inappropriateness reside in being unable to distinguish the regime's atrocities or the material horrors of death from their banalization, sentimentalization, or glorification. This kitsch process eroticizes, spectacularizes, honors, and mythologizes. For him, Nazism's relationship to death was both an aesthetic and anestheticizing one, similar to Benjamin's warning about the aestheticization of politics at the end of his essay, "The Work of Art." Friedlander is not alone in discovering kitsch in political contexts. Gillo Dorfles associates it with modern, right-wing regimes that devote themselves to ritual and pageantry and retreat into the past for models. Their glorification of death, battle, and sacrifice all establish that kitsch, like camp, is *not* necessarily constituted after the fact by outsiders. The scary allure of the SS's leather coats, for instance, was certainly evident at the time, not emerging all at once in postwar s/m dungeons around the world. Nazism's fascination with ritual and formulaic repetition was also evident in its award ceremonies for mothers who produced multiple sons, in its pseudospirituality and "debased myths," in its fetishism of beauty and purity, and in its fantasy of an endless, thousand-year Reich.[38] Nazism's fascination with death and destruction is clear in its nostalgia for classical and national myths, the warriors of old, the "glory" of previous military victories, and other past and present sacrifices or genocides that buttress the idea of nation. Noting the historical implications of these obsessions, Friedlander writes, "Kitsch death is a means to digest the past."[39] Yet in Schroeter's work, kitsch introjects the past not to destroy it, but to begin to process it as it is moved forward.

SCHROETER'S KITSCHY *BOMBER PILOT*

Initially, Schroeter's ZDF-funded *Bomber Pilot* appears to be a risky, flagrant inversion of Friedlander's and Benjamin's admonitions against the aestheticization of politics. But it is too tacky, and Schroeter too aware of its silliness, its hokey cultural references, and the characters' inflated anguish over of the tension of art versus politics to be the kind of mindless, bombastic kitsch that critics deride. Three women are performed by Schroeter

regulars: Carla (Carla Aulaulu), Mascha (Mascha Elm-Rabben), and Magdalena Munn (Magdalena Montezuma).[40] They perform as second-rate cabaret singers during the Nazi era, forced to disband when Carla takes a job with a Viennese theatre and Mascha has a nervous breakdown. *Pilot* haphazardly (and without much clarity) follows their individual activities; instead of depicting Carla's "show," for instance, we see her singing its main song while apparently working in a Viennese pastry shop. Magdalena attempts to find work for Mascha by posing as her aunt and appealing to a Nazi official; later Mascha rescues Magdalena from drowning herself. The two eventually find jobs as secretaries, after brief stints as "creative artists." Magdalena's voice-over then informs us that all three women meet again after the war at a Bruckner concert. They begin discussions about regrouping to go to the United States, this time as reformers rather than performers, to preach integration (apparently we are now in the late 1960s, the time of the film's production). Carla, nostalgic for their earlier Nazi stage career, is hard to persuade, but eventually they leave for the United States. Their rapid downfall as teachers there results from the publication of a Nazi-era photo of them; added to this is the controversy of Mascha's undepicted liaison with an American bomber pilot. We are told there is a trial (also undepicted), and the three go back to Germany where they perform for American troops. Carla has a miscarriage from the bomber pilot and suffers badly. The final image shows Magdalena supporting Carla as she walks around weakly in front of the same building we saw in the film's opening shot.

Pilot's cinematic kitsch is easy to identify. It reprises the well-worn story of a group of undertalented women trying to make a go of "artistic" (read "showbiz") careers in difficult times (with the presence of a blonde, a brunette, and a redhead, it gives a kitschy nod to *Les Girls* [Cukor, 1957]) in particular).[41] Disregarding verisimilitude at every turn, we have very few spatial and temporal features to work with, leaving only metonymic markers of history and place—swastika banners here, 1960s miniskirts there (and this in one of Schroeter's few films with a historically explicit backdrop). *Bomber Pilot* merges the pounding familiarity of Viennese icons (pastries, waltzes) with the ritual of *Sieg Heil*ing; its soundtrack is predigested and stagy (bad recordings of Liszt; Elvis Presley singing traditional Neapolitan songs); props, sets, and situations are conspicuously low-budget (straps and clothes slide off characters' shoulders; the scenes in America were obviously shot at a U.S. military base in Germany). Clearly one cannot take the characters' good intentions or lofty aspirations seriously. Yet juxtaposing their emotional earnestness with the film's emphatically tawdry presentation creates something more compelling than cheap send-up.

Carla's pastry shop performance in *Bomber Pilot*

The film's three women are so far removed from the realm of individualized characters that their names are taken from the actresses who portray them, blurring the boundaries between fiction and production even more than *Herr R* or *Holy Whore*. Their actions are often intertwined to the point of interchangeability: Carla and Mascha share the same lover and wear some of the same clothing; Mascha and Magdalena each mother the other during their respective breakdowns, and so on. The film makes no attempt to convey authenticity or a credible, coherent diegetic world; the performance style is histrionic and over-the-top. Scenes ostensibly depicting their stage performances are shot no differently than those that follow their story more generally; we do not learn what causes Mascha's breakdown, and the eponymous bomber pilot who sleeps with Mascha and Carla is never shown for certain.

As is typical of Schroeter's early work, cameras are placed close to the figures, diminishing spatial context or continuity. Obviously this draws our attention to their facial and bodily expressions, another characteristic of his film work. The expressions of the women work to convey a series of intense emotional experiences, but it is important to stress that they produce only the *signs* of intensity. Emotions, in other words, are produced through the signs, rather than being the force that generates them: feelings are less *of* the characters than they are signaled *by* them. In that regard, Schroeter's

aesthetic pushes melodramatic style to its most extreme, presenting it lavishly but then voiding it of expressive content. Some critics might say that that is what leads to the tired heart of kitsch, where emotions lounge around as so much surface, which they condemn for being formulaic, insincere, or deceptive. Yet there is nothing predictable in the characters' responses in *Bomber Pilot*, nor in our own. It is impossible to know what the film *wants* or *expects* us to do with our feelings—in contrast to modernist strategies intent on specified results, discussed in Chapter Two.

Thus the emotions and desires at work in Schroeter's film are not disingenuous; it's just that we can't understand or explain them. They are not, for instance, the provenance of a singular source or body. But neither are they abstracted, rarefied, or transcendent, despite their detachment from explicit human, psychological, and somatic sources. Indeed, the film's emotions are intense ones—grief, emotional breakdown, frustration, physical pain, longing. The materiality of the signs conveying them are too overwhelming to trivialize. Asynchronous screams and whimpers overtake characters who may look like they're singing; conversely, we hear them sing when they're not even moving their mouths. Familiar songs are performed out of tune, with absurd new lyrics; characters wear costumes of overdetermined fantasy scenarios, from sailor's suit to bustier and garters.

VOICE AND IMAGE

Given his cinematic separation of expression from source, it is perhaps not surprising that Schroeter has repeatedly attacked psychoanalysis and psychological readings and renderings throughout his career. Regarding *Der Tag der Idioten*, whose lead character, without much provocation, checks into a psychiatric hospital, he said,

> The audience can use its own imagination to interpret the significance of her behaviour in the few scenes prior to her admission in the clinic. Psychoanalysis doesn't interest me. I don't believe in it—this system of psychological terror. Cinema is almost entirely made up of psychological dramas, of films, with this psychological terror that plays with archetypes.[42]

It should be equally unsurprising that Schroeter is no fan of Expressionism, derived as it is from the outward expression of psychologically constructed interiority. The asynchronous soundtracks of *Pilot* and most of his other early films reject the surface-depth model of both Expressionism and psychoanalysis, refuting their ability to unlock inner turmoil or explain emotional behavior. Disinterested in the source of emotions, Schroeter

concentrates on the culturally available forms they take. Thus he endorses expressivity, but not Expressionism:

> It would be absurd to assert that the desire for beauty and truth is merely an illusion of our romantic-capitalist society. Undoubtedly, the desire for exalted, larger-than-life wish-fulfilment, as we find it in all traditional art, to which we can certainly add the modern "trivial" media of cinema and television, corresponds to a very general human need. In my films I want to live out the very few basic human moments of expressivity to the point of musical and gestural excess—those few completely authentic feelings: life, love, joy, hatred, jealousy and the fear of death, without psychologizing them. [43]

Because emotions are loaded with social and political resonance, the opposition that Schroeter intimates here between politics and aesthetics does not hold up. Nearly all of Schroeter's appreciators—from Fassbinder to *Cahiers du Cinéma*, Gary Courant to Gary Indiana—stress the intensely political nature of his "decadent aesthetics" to show "the death, the lies, the selfishness and self-destructiveness" of "consumer culture."[44] Thus, without announcing a specific political or even critical agenda (as he would indeed be loathe to do), Schroeter uses style and emotionalism to convey what is in effect the political need for its expression, rather than its solution.

If, as Kaja Silverman has argued, "the voice is the site of perhaps the most radical of all subjective divisions—the division between meaning and materiality,"[45] the singing voice accentuates that divide even further. Irrevocably tied to the body, it nudges the voice toward the realm of materiality. Barthes's notion of the "grain" of the voice comes to life in *Bomber Pilot*, where Carla's off-pitch voice seems to physically damage Strauss's work. The Native American chanting during Magdalena's "Snake Dance" obliges western ears to focus on sounds and rhythms without benefit of verifiable meaning. To use the masculinist/erotic vocabulary of Barthes, the singing voice pierces, cuts, soothes, soars, and climaxes. With Schroeter, listening also becomes physicalized: audiences may respond with tears, rapture, passion, and terror. Singing voices seem to be able to move people—perhaps not to an identifiable place—but to an uncharted, unoccupiable space where desires roam. *Pilot* accentuates that several times when, for example, we hear brief instrumental passages preceding operatic arias. It goes on then to *withhold* the arias, leaving us only with spaces we *want* to be filled in.

Some of the film's voices are used for their specific significance and references, as in the radio broadcast announcing Hitler's death or an English commentator describing an appearance of Winston Churchill. These, however, are the exceptions. Usually, the soundtrack seems detached from an

exact historical time or place. We hear prerecorded applause and music, but by far the most prevalent sound is the women's voice-overs. These are almost entirely nonsynchronous, much like the disembodied female voice Silverman appreciates in feminist and art cinema.[46] Even when Carla and Magdalena appear to be narrating their own stories, we are given no assurance that the voices belong to them, producing a schism between diegetic events or character and the cinematic means of producing them. Schroeter's use of asynchronous sound dramatizes the material unnaturalness, if not the irreconcilability, of cinematic sound and image. Deprived of synchronous mixing, we cannot make any direct correlation between voice and singing female bodies. Sometimes numbers are prerecorded, the work of professional singers; other times, one presumes they are sung by the actresses or other nonprofessionals who perform them passionately, painfully off-key.

Schroeter claimed that with *Pilot* he wanted the words to be absurd and the images sincere. The remarks are misleading, since the film does anything but assure the sincerity of its images. One scene elaborates this inconsistency well. While working as an adult educator, Magdalena gives a desultory analysis of a book of photographs of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, the German soprano of the 1950s and 1960s—who was not famous enough at the time in the film's diegesis to have had an album devoted to her.[47] As if to comment on the stagy presentation of the characters in *Bomber Pilot*, Magdalena approvingly refers to a photograph of the soprano after a performance: "An expression of great tension is visible in her face, it is a document of humanity. The composition itself shows the expression of enormous fatigue and happiness after a show." Yet the idea that expressivity (sincerity?) as producible though performance or posing is undercut by her next set of comments:

> Here we have, on the other hand, a terrible photo, a portrait. Everything is posed. The lighting accentuates the completely artificial manner of holding her head, her heavenward gaze is clearly affected, an artificiality of her expression. This shows us a complete lack of sincerity. [And then, in complete contrast to Schroeter's claims:] This example shows us that as a means of expression, photography can only give us artifice and falseness of expression and artificial character.

The last snapshot depicts Schwarzkopf on a "beautiful day," "unposed," with her family and dog. For Magdalena, "the photography proves its full humanity." It is striking that Schroeter, whose stagy aesthetic articulates precisely this kind of ineffable human expression, would suggest that emotional "sincerity" resides with the unposed and the natural. (At the same

time, his improvisational directing style may work towards what might be called a spontaneous humanity.) One can take nothing at face value in Schroeter's cinema.

No matter how you approach it, the connection between artifice and something broaching "sincerity" remains significant in Schroeter's form of kitsch. Elsewhere in the film, as Carla adjusts her corset, she remarks in a strangely epiphanous voice-over: "I carefully watched my straps. I was surprised to see how I was standing straighter and how the expression on my face had changed. I felt as if I were experiencing my life, and I felt completely satisfied with myself." Carla makes this statement while facing a mirror that faces us, revealing another split, between self as actant and observer, which seems to acknowledge the other divisions cinematic representation imposes on us. It is no accident that this occurs just as Carla is asked to join the theatre, and that, while the soundtrack remains continuous, a dissolve links the first image, where Carla speaks in front of some tacky red Victorian wallpaper, to the second, where she is dressed in an evening gown and made up, supposedly in the theatre, but in front of the same garish wallpaper.

BOMBER PILOT: MUSIC AND *KULTURSCHEISSE*

The music in *Bomber Pilot* is a provocative grab bag of selections from Verdi, Strauss, *Carmen Jones, West Side Story,* Sibelius, Elvis, Wagner, and a number of U.S. and German pop tunes. Its simultaneously kitschy and critical functions are in evidence from the film's opening shot, in which the women *Sieg Heil* in undergarments as we hear the final, triumphant section of Liszt's Wagnerian-like Symphonic Poem No. 1, "Les Préludes." For as Wagnerian and full-blooded as the opening music is—and for the Nazi kitsch it immediately calls forth—its irony is already fierce, since Wagner's belief in opera as a means of unifying diverse aesthetic forms is utterly inapplicable to Schroeter's film, which is structured around fragments and so many border crossings. Like Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at the beginning of *Maria Braun,* the quality of the brief Liszt selection played is deliberately awful. Immediately following it is a traditional (and again, damaged) version of Johann Strauss Jr.'s "On the Beautiful Blue Danube," a waltz whose imagery of glittery rivers and fin-de-siècle Vienna, with its chipper soprano delivery, is fully inappropriate to the style and wartime story of *Bomber Pilot*. These pieces of musical kitsch are worked upon so vigorously that they no longer "work" except as shimmery acoustic relics.

These examples show the extent to which Schroeter uses and abuses German and Austrian musical heritage, and comparisons to Syberberg or even Kluge's *Patriot* might seem inevitable. But unlike them, *Pilot* makes clear that German identity cannot be stitched together from the wreckage of German culture. This is established in a crucial scene after the war, when we are told that the three women happen to meet "at a Bruckner concert in the Municipal Theatre." One by one, each enters the foyer after the performance has begun. Obviously, we expect to hear something by Anton Bruckner, whose favored status under the Reich is well known. (His work was even reorchestrated and conducted differently during the war.) Will Schroeter provide the Nazi-sanctioned version, or another? Neither. Instead, we get the final section of the overture of *Nabucco*, the early political opera by Verdi.

By selecting music that is not Bruckner, Schroeter again dramatizes the unreliable relationship between film image and sound. Yet, instead of pitting the two against the other (with the image showing "sincerity" and the soundtrack "deception," for instance), the soundtrack that announces Bruckner and gives us Verdi splits from within, exposing its *own* deceptiveness. Moreover, given the political weight of the reference to Bruckner, the acoustic sleight of hand raises other questions: What of the question of nation? Does the presence of Verdi mock Germany's postwar banning of Bruckner performances, a "refusal of coming to terms"? Or could Schroeter be commenting on the nearly transnational exchangeability of music that has been put to nationalist uses? (It must be noted that, despite his appropriation by the Nazis, Bruckner was not a nationalist composer.)

Verdi, by contrast, was a national (and nationalist) treasure in Italy, a key cultural figure during the *Risorgimento*. Significantly to Schroeter's film, his opera *Nabucco* tells the ancient story of a captive Jewish people wanting to form their own state—for obvious reasons it was enormously successful in nineteenth-century nationalist Italy. Documents show that massive crowds spontaneously started singing one of its famous and more patriotic choruses at Verdi's funeral. Yet for all of his nationalist fervor, the Italian composer does not so much escape or oppose "Germanness" as to help constitute it. Bypassing Verdi's place with Europe's history of modern nationalism, bypassing even *Nabucco*'s plot, his Italianness gives the film more material for its examination of Germanness. Germans have been preoccupied with Latin cultures like Italy and Spain in a fascination that is as economically real (tourism) as it is phantasmatically potent, and the binarisms sustaining such ethnic othering are both obvious and obnoxious.[48] This kind of other nation-within-nation formation is nearly as significant as *Nabucco*'s story line. For by occupying the acoustic space that was to have been Bruckner's in

Schroeter's film, Verdi's opera on the Jewish people shows how national, ethnic, and sexual differences establish and sustain Germanness, much like kitsch, which is required to sustain art as its exotic, degraded other. The choice thus criticizes Nazi anti-Semitism at the same time that it signals it.

The Germanness that Verdi's work both censors and constitutes is influenced by other music as well, which establishes Germanness through various geographical and cultural twists and hybrids emerging from "outside" of Germany. We hear a short bridge from *West Side Story*, a text that blurred the musical's popular status with higher, purportedly artistic forms (partly through the teaming of Stephen Sondheim and Leonard Bernstein) and whose own story of interethnic romance dramatized the consequences of other kinds of border crossings. Elsewhere in *Bomber Pilot*, Elvis sings the Neapolitan "Santa Lucia" in a particularly bizarre cross-pollination. Elvis's and Bernstein's "American" music may be said to infiltrate Schroeter's film just as the American bomber pilot infiltrates the German bodies of Mascha and especially Carla. An especially interesting example is "Beat Out Dat Rhythm on a Drum," taken from *Carmen Jones* (1954), the film adaptation of Bizet's *Carmen* ("Beat Out Dat Rhythm on a Drum" is based on a portion of what was originally the "Gypsy Dance"). As we have already seen, *Carmen* epitomizes nineteenth-century Europe's colonialist impulses: fetishizing, eroticizing, yet degrading the ethnic/national/regional/sexual other. Otto Preminger's 1954 film adaptation is well known as being one of the few all-black Hollywood productions of the classical era (more accurately, its cast was black). It was released about the time when *Bomber Pilot*'s fictional women are considering bringing their integrationist message to America. Director Preminger was another German (actually, Viennese) who came to the United States with a special interest in the racial "other." Preminger maintained a relatively long-term affair with Dorothy Dandridge, the actress who portrayed Carmen Jones. He kept the relationship under wraps, eventually ending it out of concern for his career (clearly, the fear of "Carmen"'s alterity had not diminished over the years). In the film, moreover, Dandridge was dubbed by a white singer, Marilyn—not Lena—Horne.

"Rhythm on a Drum" appears in *Bomber Pilot* several times, usually in stagy, repeated scenes of Mascha, Magdalena, and Carla "smoking a marijuana cigarette at the breakfast table," a probable reference to Carmen's job in the cigar factory in the opera. In these scenes, we are told that the women are preparing their integrationist message to take to the United States. They are motionless, except for the collective, kitschy jump from their seats a few seconds after the first-person voice-over, influenced by the song's lyrics, that states, "Our hearts took a leap." This detail, however

Magdalena: deadly beauty at the river's edge in *Bomber Pilot*

ridiculous, reinforces the way that *Pilot*'s asynchronous sound-image relationships are not oppositional—bypassing Eisenstein's and Eisler's advocacy of "conflict" and "counterpoint" into a broader, vaguer realm. One is tempted to use Chion's notion of anempathetic sound, with its reference to sound's apathy towards the image. Yet, for as much as Schroeter discourages listeners from empathizing with the characters as such, there is nothing apathetic about his treatment of human feelings.

A different scene recalls Peer Raben's remarks on irony and beauty's ability to coexist. At the end of the war, a despairing Magdalena is "looking for an issue, an issue towards humanity" and goes to a river to drown herself. The long shot is depicted in black-and-white in diffuse focus and low-intensity light. Compositionally, the image is devoted to the exquisitely beautiful landscape rather than character. Magdalena's voice-over tells us about her problems with productivity ("My problem was never being able to complete a project"); then we hear the German broadcast announcing Hitler's death, and then a British transmission of an appearance by Churchill. If image, sound, and psychologized character motivation were working in tandem, one might assume that Magdalena's desire to die was a result of the Führer's death. The film's stylistic strategies do not facilitate such a reading, however, even with other diegetic details, like the success of her wartime cabaret act and her problems finding self-worth or employ-

ment after the war. When Mascha comes to save her from the water, the soundtrack moves from a German pop song ("Schwartz Engel") to a brief, moving instrumental passage from Verdi. Neither of these musical selections enhances the idea of Aryan purity or a pure German culture, and so we are left without motivation for Magdalena's act.

The "Vienna Blood Waltz" that Carla sings shows how a clichéd cultural icon functions as an acoustic builder of national and subjective identities. To most listeners in the West, Johann Strauss Jr.'s tune would already be familiar to the point of kitsch, and Carla's frequent and deliberately awful renderings do nothing to dispel that. "Vienna Blood Waltz" was initially written without lyrics, as an orchestral piece. Strauss later incorporated his waltz into an 1899 operetta of the same title, and a subsequent rendering by Willi Forst in 1942 would prove very popular within the Nazi regime. The following are the transcribed lyrics from the original operetta. Although they are not what Carla sings (more on that in a moment), they show how music plays easily to regionalist, nationalist ends. Of particular interest is the focus on the body as a carrier of regional identity:

Wiener Blut!	Vienna blood
Wiener Blut!	Vienna blood,
Eig'ner Saft,	Makes you fly
Voller Kraft,	Like a song
Voller Glut!	To the sky.
Wiener Blut,	Makes your heart
Selt'nes Gut!	Ever gleam,
Du erhebst	Gives a wing
Und belebst	To your dream!
Unsern Mut!	Vienna blood,
Wiener Blut!	Vienna blood!
Wiener Blut!	Makes you see
Was die Stadt	Paradise
Schoenes hat,	In the smile
In dir ruht!	Of two eyes.
Wiener Blut!	Makes you laugh,
Heisse Flut!	Makes you cry,
Allerort	Really live
Gilt das Wort:	Till you die![50]
Wiener Blut![49]	

With this piece in mind, it is worth returning to Friedlander's criticism of the song "Lili Marleen" in Fassbinder's film. Kitsch, he maintains, is produced through deliberate, predictable, and formulaic repetition, just as it is supposed to produce predictable, formulaic emotions. Norbert Schultz's sentimental song functions that way for Friedlander, who, not without irony,

takes Goebbels's disdain for the piece ("a macabre dance") and extends it to Fassbinder's film at large. It seems to me that Friedlander underestimates how films like Schroeter's or Fassbinder's actually do acknowledge the "macabre dance" of Nazism. As Gary Indiana has argued about *Bomber Pilot*, it "reduce[s] several turgid clichés about Nazi Germany to their actual size," and, about the director's work more generally, "Schroeter's flaunting use of Wagnerian bombast and the species of kitsch most readily identified as fascist food has the peculiar virtue of tapping a tradition that is, in Germany, simultaneously sacrosanct and shameful. In Germany (and even elsewhere), every Schroeter film is a fresh provocation."[51] This kind of kitsch uses kitsch against itself, taking aim not just at the overblown expressivity of German Romanticism, but, as Indiana argues, at Nazi kitsch in all of its deadliness.

HOMEOPATHIC INTROJECTION

> Not despite the kitsch to which it is drawn is Mahler's music great, but because its construction unties the tongue of kitsch, unfetters the longing that is merely exploited by the commerce that the kitsch serves.
>
> —THEODOR ADORNO

I want to reformulate what I initially presented as Schroeter's embrace of kitsch in terms of homeopathy, whose relevance to postwar Germany was made evident in Santner's *Stranded Objects*. Since science is unable explain how homeopathy works, it functions as a stubborn, indigestible "other" to the medical establishment—exactly as kitsch functions in regard to aesthetics.[52] To be sure, homeopathic principles organize Schroeter's brand of kitsch, taking in (introjecting) elements that in other circumstances (or for other people) would be harmful or unwanted.

In psychoanalytic terms, homeopathy describes the encrypted losses and attachments Abraham and Torok discuss in their work on the formation of the body-ego, as I discussed in Chapter One. Santner notes how human psychic development is itself a homeopathic process, beginning with Freud's famous game of *fort/da*, in which the child stages and controls the disappearance of its mother through transitional objects (toys, etc.) that substitute for her. "[T]hanks to this procedure, he [*sic*] is able to administer in controlled doses the absence he is mourning."[53] Although the *fort/da* game, with its dosing out of negative elements, may give the child a sense of "mastering" its initial traumas, the sense of control and mastery is illusory, since with them the child "integrate[s] the loss of its narcissistic fantasies of centrality and omnipotence."[54] As Santner notes, negativity,

absence, and death are self-administered with even more force in the subsequent Oedipal phase, when an inferior relation to the father (castration), is inscribed on developing ego-bodies. Again, such "integration" of loss ironically "empowers the child to have a future of his own."[55] So while necessary for survival, the homeopathic process cannot be confused with conquest or moving past a painful loss or trauma. It moves forward with loss, and does not attempt to reclaim imagined lost states.

Critics always take a methodological leap when moving from medical or psychoanalytic accounts of subjective processes to film texts or, indeed, to entire national "bodies." Yet Santner compellingly argues that homeopathic principles are relevant to the New German Cinema, which emerged from a "wound culture," and whose films are filled with fragments, reworked icons, music, and histories in its attempts to come to terms with the past. Of all the directors discussed thus far, Schroeter best exemplifies the acceptance of the past that Santner describes and that I am developing here. Schroeter accepts the abject side of German *Kulturscheisse,* and, with *Bomber Pilot,* "takes in" controlled doses of unwanted aesthetics, political ideology, desire, and history. Spectators and auditors can disidentify with what is both depicted and undepicted (the latter point leading to the argument that Schroeter "encodes" his film with a clandestine gay aesthetic). Schroeter's materialized kitsch hyperbolically—if indirectly—depicts things that audiences are not supposed to talk about, desire, or lament. It helps us engage off-limit memories and desires, even though they seem to be at considerable remove from our current positions. What happens is less a control over undesirable aspects of the past than a momentary embrace, a way of *bringing them into relationship with our present identity.*

Lest I overstate my claims about "successful" homeopathic outcomes in Schroeter's film, let us return to the acoustic haunting of Carla by Strauss's "Vienna Blood Waltz." This piece gives the most concrete example of potential homeopathic introjection in *Bomber Pilot* and haunts the body of the film as a whole, so obsessively is it played. Frozen into acoustic iconicity, the tune is a kitschy relic of fin-de-siècle Viennese culture, with its waltzes, twinkling rivers, lavish pastry, and coffee shops, all interwoven and idealized. As the original libretto reveals, that fantasy extended to human bodies as well, intertwining geographic and somatic elements in an impossible fiction: Vienna literally *runs through your veins.* So fully at one with their surroundings are Viennese subjects that they are physically indistinguishable from them—blood, rivers, all flow together, the naturalized sources of this propped-up identity. From a post-Shoah perspective, the notion is hardly reassuring, to be sure, and is resonant with Nazi ideology (and decree) that established national and racial identity through blood-

lines. According to this logic, Jewish people, with no homeland, could never attain "purity."

Schroeter exaggerates the pernicious element of the original "Wienerblut" through Carla's modified lyrics, roughly translated below:

> Vienna blood
> Vienna blood,
> Full of rot
> Full of force,
> Full of life.
> Vienna blood
> Vienna blood,
> You have conquered
> Our hearts and our souls
> Our weapon resides therein
> With the bouquets of Strauss melodies.
> Only Vienna blood understands us,
> The real Viennese.
> Still there are people who transgress
> Always fight, always agitate
> They make out to be Evil
> Leave goodness in limbo
> And who does it shame? Only us
> Viennese Blood.
> When our hearts are nearly broken
> We never complain. Shame is abused
> What's done is done
> The past is past
> One doesn't discuss it
> And holds out one's hand

With his new lyrics, Schroeter illuminates the antihomeopathic choices available for Carla and postwar subjects to make: "What's done is done / The past is past / One doesn't discuss it." Rather than integrate the Nazi past into the present, it is cast out like so much bad blood. Its negative aspects are projected elsewhere to avoid contaminating the lively Viennese strain, which alone is believed to veil irritability, fights, or, presumably, an unpleasant little experience like Nazism.

Carla holds on to the poisonous song, unable to release the past pleasures it represents for her—namely, the sense of fulfillment she experienced in the Nazi era. Singing it over and over again, her character is oblivious to its potential as an object to help her move forward. She is equally unaware of its deadliness: importantly, she learns about the death of her real or theatrical lover (played by Schroeter) after she first performs the song. Nor is it incidental that she is actively harmed by the "angry," "spite-

ful" blood on which the lyrics insist, for it is her body that loses blood in the miscarriage of the bomber pilot's fetus. It would seem that the introjection of American otherness cannot be sustained by her "real Viennese" body, and the film underscores that fragility in its concluding shot of her, barely able to walk. It is utterly plausible that Carla is associated with the "Viennese Blood Waltz," since, of the three women, she is the most enticed by theatrical exhibitionism, performing for and receiving the approving gaze and hearing of German leadership. (She also keeps referring to all the men who adored her at the time.) Because she was bereaved of that approval after the war, her body-ego became susceptible to all sorts of poisonous introjections, whether of her beloved, spiteful Viennese blood, or the damaging American semen.

The other two women seem unconcerned about the approval of their Viennese, Nazi, or U.S. military audiences—although I hesitate to psychologize the characters in this way (more on this below). The choice of musical pieces they perform for American troops toward the end of the film shows a Schroeter-like disinterest in what might please their listeners. Mascha gives an off-key rendition of "Schmerzen / The Bliss of Sorrow," from a Wagner song cycle, to virulent hisses; Magdalena performs her intense, Galas-like "Snake Dance." Carla, by contrast, is perfectly at home and sings an upbeat and well-received habañera (kitsch and exoticism again), "Abschied am Meer," still clinging to the water imagery of the Strauss waltzes. Mascha and Magdalena's performances know no such gaiety; theirs are intense expressions of vague, undefined emotion. It is kitsch, to be sure, but without the formulaic saccharine feelings routinely linked to it.

Mascha's *lied* incorporates a spoiled element of "Germanness" (Wagner off-key) into the postwar identity of which she is a figure, othering her own culture while dramatizing the "unwanted within the wanted." Magdalena's impassioned dance literalizes an attempt to embrace difference: her arms are actually outstretched as if to get that embrace. Her abject object is less defined than the Wagner in Mascha's performance. It may seem closer on the one hand to the realm of "pure" expressivity, but on the other, the Hopi rhythms chanted in voice-over concretize the performance's historical and cultural roots, which lie elsewhere. To be sure, presenting indigenous music as incomprehensible is problematic and provides a crucial instance of the film positioning nonwhite culture always *outside* of Germany. In contrast to Mascha, then, who finds abject kitsch *within* German culture, Magdalena brings it in from beyond its borders, importing its signs in her make-up and dress.

Magdalena and Mascha's embrace of alterity is connected to their desire to express "what they experienced under Hitler to the Americans" in an

overt homeopathic appeal to others. Even their interest in racial *integration* indicates a willingness to challenge the pure bloodlines vaunted by the regime (and Strauss's song). Plotted across *Bomber Pilot* in this and so many other details, racial integration challenges the anxieties many commentators have about physical impurity and the "invasion" in kitsch (and fascist) discourse. Of course, this is done from a white-dominant perspective, grafting "blackness" onto the United States. In other words, there may be an expression of desire to encrypt, embrace, "integrate" alterity, but at one nation removed. (This may explain why the homeopathic cure of the characters as diegetic persons is not altogether successful, a point to which I will return.) As they initially leave Germany, Magdalene's voice-over states, "This was the occasion for a new beginning—to leave everything behind us—all the errors of the past, a clean slate" in naive hope of escape. Once in the States, the women quickly realize how poorly prepared they are for the "complexities" of the actual situation. Suspected of being communist, their pasts are exposed when "an African cook of German descent"—a suggestively interracial, nationally indeterminant figure—publishes pictures from their Nazi show.

When they return to Germany, the trio "finally decided to take responsibility for [their] past" in their strongest collective attempt at remembrance. They *return* to their cabaret act and, following the three solo numbers described above, collectively perform an aria they had performed for Hitler, Franz Lehár's "Meine Lippen sie kussen." Donning their garter and corset costumes once again, they move like the mannequins behind them on their makeshift stage. The dark backdrop and clearly defined edges of the stage ensure that we recognize this as staged performance, although there is no theatrical audience. Choreographically, there is nothing more than moving stills or poses, and in some ways the performance is as detached and mechanistic as their *Sieg Heil*s on all fours at the film's outset. The scene is immediately followed by Carla's final collapse, and then *Bomber Pilot* appears to perform some homeopathic administration of its own by repeating previous scenes. The first two are accompanied by Elvis's version of "Santa Lucia" and then Sibelius's "Valse triste"; they are emotionally intense, and the slow tempo of the music brushes the images with a vague sadness.

Why do homeopathic administrations of the past fail to help the characters of *Bomber Pilot?* Diegetically, it can be accounted for by the Adenauerian context in which they find themselves. With its forward-driven, amnesiac ambitions and preoccupation with the German miracle, the period could hardly have offered the supportive context necessary for it to work. Nor would the American occupiers, equally eager to purge all traces

Caruso gesturing towards the audience in Schroeter's sequence of Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo*

of Nazism, offer anything better. But since the film does *not* focus on the characters as psychological beings, to outline their encounters with homeopathic processes in this way is to miss the point. For, instead of offering a successful cure to them, *Bomber Pilot articulates the mechanisms of that cure to its listeners*. Again, as Santner noted, the "presence of an empathetic witness" is key to that "socially supportive" space. Since the film bereaves itself of diegetic witnesses (beyond the significant exception of the roles the women play for one another), viewers and listeners are given the responsibility of receiving and returning the affirming gazes—and empathetic listening—Santner discusses.[56] I believe that the process is no less intense for people watching the film decades after its initial release, in different countries and in a wide variety of political and social situations. What is crucial is relating to others who have historical and personal experiences that don't match up with one's own social, gendered, ethnic, and psychic positions. Like homeopathy, Schroeter's kitsch involves not only the introjection of a "poisonous," external substance, but also the undesirable alterity it implies. Going one step beyond melodrama and melancholia's appeal, difference here is accepted and acceptable to the body-ego; what was deemed poison in fact becomes beneficial, to us if not to the characters. What is more, with the very significant exception of race, *Bomber Pilot* maintains that Germany's toxic history and its own *Kulturscheisse exist from within*.

Schroeter's use of close-ups, abstracted space, and direct address elaborate the film's appeals to externalized others. The importance of that emotional invitation is repeatedly illustrated throughout his work, including

"He looked right at me!" Fitzcarraldo's jubilant identification with Caruso

the brief segment of Verdi's *Emani* (1842) he staged for Herzog at the beginning of *Fitzcarraldo.* Fitzcarraldo (Klaus Kinski), the would-be impresario, has traveled through the jungle for days to see Enrico Caruso and Sarah Bernhardt perform. Once there, he is transfixed and exclaims with complete bliss to his partner: "Did you see that? [Caruso] looked right at me!" The remark is absurd, but the desire is not, and the fact that Caruso's character stretches his arm toward audience members indicates a possible basis for Fitzcarraldo's hopeful response. To be sure, Kinski's excited reaction is the perfect corollary to the general absurdity with which the piece is performed. Bernhardt (who looks rather like a drag queen) lip-syncs while a figure at the foot of the stage performs the songs from the opera. Once again Schroeter/Herzog divorce sound from image, voice from body, image from labor, destroying cinematic verisimilitude all the more by immersing the whole performance in extravagant glitz.

Listeners of *Bomber Pilot* may be like Fitzcarraldo, wanting to respond to the performance of its characters, but here they are prevented from perceiving them as actual divas or as psychologically credible figures. Take Mascha's nervous breakdown, for instance. We have no way to know why she has it or how to identify with her in any standard sense of the term. The kind of distance that this creates between audience and character is not the unemotional one 1980s critics thought they had found in Brecht, nor is it ironic or mocking. It isn't really camp, either. Instead, it is charged with signs of emotional expressivity, however unfixed and unclear. Without knowing how to situate ourselves in terms of understanding, sharing, or identifying the nature of Mascha's pain and collapse, for instance, we

might construe that "distance" as Schroeter's way of creating a place for us to be sympathetic witnesses, if not empathetic ones. Here it is worth mentioning the overwhelming affection with which Schroeter is described by actors, especially women, and crew members with whom he has worked: Andréa Ferréol, Carole Bouquet, and Magdalena Montezuma (who lived with him) have all heaped praises on him. Asked about this evident affection, Schroeter said that no, he probably could not work with people he found "negative." It would seem that even during filming, Schroeter creates conditions favorable for homeopathic expression.

The musical choices Schroeter makes help extend that openness to the film listener. Although the Liszt at the beginning and the Verdi at the concert hall make specific points, it is more common for the sheer beauty of the piece (or its ugliness, its anachronistic inappropriateness, whatever) to overwhelm, giving us little more than undirected, aimless sound. This is not to champion their abstraction, and, indeed, objections might be raised that the object in Schroeter's text is too ill-defined, his homeopathic ghosts too unspecified, to be worked through. But I believe that this openness is what enables a range of emotional positions and responses on our part, as so many "pieces" of Germany's past are introjected and presented to us. That he is able to do so out of pieces of "culture shit" renders his kitschy project even more compelling. As Schroeter describes his *Love's Debris*, "The title of this film is based on a very deep conviction that what we express vocally is the 'product' of our quest for a closer approach to the Other, for Love and all possible romantic aptitudes."[57] In this way, *Bomber Pilot* widens the space for empathetic listening that Fassbinder's melodramas and Kluge's "antiopera" had initially begun to clear.

HISTORY

> Like the performance of history itself [Schroeter's] cinema inscribes the historical subject in both its beauty and its pain as a single moment, where an external history and a perceiving subject become momentarily and ecstatically lost in each other.
>
> —TIMOTHY CORRIGAN

More than most directors affiliated with the New German Cinema, Schroeter deals in the raw "power of emotion" and desire. He does this by bringing objects into emotions, and then these objects into the self. And just as his notion of self becomes flexible and multifaceted, so Schroeter transforms the concept of Germany into a site of competing forces. It is German and un-German, full of beautiful music, full of tainted music; it

craves integration and racial purity, getting rid of the past and not letting it go. The most obvious forms of homeopathic introjection in *Bomber Pilot* are signaled by the undesirable aspects of Germany's fascist history and its inability to deal with racial differences after the war. This work is concerned with the impact that this undesirable material and introjections have on the subjects that face them. We see this in the emphasis on emotion and desire that runs throughout his work as so much yearning, frustration, ephemeral satisfactions; human identifications move to and fro according to music, divas, political regimes. Their movement is as indeterminate as it is passionate. This is precisely what kitsch is *not* supposed to do: its power, as most critics assert, stems from manipulating stock, predictable sentiment and responses.

Schroeter's nonjudgmental attitude towards intense emotional expression is central to his treatment of kitsch. This is not to say that he is unaware of kitsch's dangers (Carla's story would have been impossible otherwise), but he is unafraid of the judgment projected onto it—its purported decadence, lies, cheapness, or *Kulturscheisse*. In short, he does not try to keep the negative alterity associated with it at bay by taking kitsch into his own work. He even finds beauty in kitsch, as Peer Raben could. That lack of fear of beauty is not trivial, given Broch's remarks about kitsch doing something beautifully, not well (and *Bomber Pilot* certainly could not be accused of doing anything well). In contrast to modernist and Marxist aesthetics, beauty here is not always already narcotizing or ahistorically transcendent, although Schroeter is aware that music has been put to precisely those ends, as in Nazism or Romantic aesthetics. By interweaving concepts like "authentic feeling" and "beauty" and so many kitschy props and artifacts into his text, Schroeter does not put them in the position of alterity, of abandoned, "othered" objects, or products of the realm of "non-art," to recall Kulka. In fact, he says as much in a discussion on Shakespeare: "[For me] there's no great divide between kitsch and art. It's just stupid to look for traditional values in art and culture—one should only try to find a vitality in them."[58]

It is worth returning to Hermann Broch. The full quote from which his earlier remarks were taken reveals how the attempt to ostracize kitsch, which he certainly wants to do, is actually impossible. Kitsch ends up like an unwanted body part that the body *cannot* reject:

> Kitsch is certainly not "bad art"; it forms its own closed system, which is lodged like a foreign body in the overall system of art, or which, if you prefer, appears alongside it. Its relationship to art can be compared—and this is more than a mere metaphor—to the relationship between the system of the Anti-Christ and the system of Christ. Every system of values, if

> attacked from the outside in its autonomy, can become distorted and corrupt: a form of Christianity that forces priests to bless cannons and tanks is as close to kitsch as any literature that exalts the well-loved ruling house or the well-loved leader, or the well-loved field-marshal or the well-loved president. The enemy within, however, is more dangerous than these attacks from outside: every system is dialectically capable of developing its own anti-system and is indeed compelled to do so. The danger is all the greater when at first glance the system and the anti-system appear to be identical and it is hard to see that the former is open and the latter closed.[59]

Below, Nietzsche elaborates the "second glance" that Broch implies but does not elaborate. Secularizing the diseased, "foreign" body of kitsch, Germany, and himself, Nietzsche writes:

> What is strangest is this: after [a long illness] one has a different taste—a *second* taste. Out of such abysses, also out of the abyss of great suspicion, one returns newborn, having shed one's skin, more ticklish and sarcastic, with a more delicate taste for joy, with a more tender tongue for all good things with gayer senses [!], with a second dangerous interest in joy, more childlike and yet a hundred times more subtle than one has ever been before. How repulsive pleasure is now, that crude, musty, brown pleasure as it is understood by those who like pleasure, our "educated" people, our rich people, and our rulers![60]

Nietzsche's diatribe against pleasure has little to do with Schroeter's agenda, yet associating its fecal "brown" characteristics with highbrow culture *does*. Nietzsche takes aim at a nineteenth-century German *Kulturscheisse* that the director subsequently adopts and brings inward. Especially significant is the renewal, that "second glance" or hearing that Nietzsche raises, which suggests an openness to the lessons of our predecessors as well as an ability to move forward in health. In a sense, Nietzsche offers a nascent theory of kitsch, one whose irony is stronger than Schroeter's and whose "tender tongue for all good things" is considerably more diminished. For texts like *Bomber Pilot* certainly offer that newly reborn body to us, rejuvenated but not juvenile in its second "tastes," over thirty years after its release and sixty years after World War II.

The words of Julia Kristeva suggestively hint at the productive capacity of kitsch: recall her reference to beauty as "the depressive's other realm." Building on Freud's theory of sublimation and artistic creativity and theories of allegory, she writes:

> Sublimation's dynamics, by summoning up primary processes and idealization, weaves a *hypersign* around and with the depressive void. This is *allegory,* as lavishness of that which *no longer is,* but which regains for

> myself [*sic*] a higher meaning because I am able to remake nothingness, better than it was and within an unchanging harmony, here and now and forever, for the sake of someone else. Artifice, as sublime meaning for and on behalf of the underlying, implicit nonbeing, replaces the ephemeral. Beauty is consubstantial with it. . . . [B]eauty emerges as the admirable face of loss, transforming it in order to make it live.[61]

Although Kristeva does not address the historical implications of the processes she observes, the absence (of the past) can be made hyperpresent through conspicuously beautiful allegory. Here kitsch, instead of being locked out of history, or called its murderer (*pace* Friedlander), makes it present, its "ephemerability" displaced as it brings its loss to life.

What does the kitschy aesthetic of films like *Bomber Pilot* do, in the end? Self-aware, as kitsch is not wont to be, it lacks disdain or judgment and produces critique—from which kitsch is also routinely dissociated. Othered in aesthetic, gay, heterosexual, and even political accounts, kitsch forms part of the national *Kulturscheisse* with which Schroeter works and in which he is able to find beauty, criticism, and tastelessness all at once. For him, kitsch in general, and music in particular, can create the kind of encounters with undesirable elements of history, self, and national identities important to homeopathic "recovery" and disidentificatory positioning. For Schroeter, Corrigan argues, "history becomes a recurring moment, where time and place are an almost arbitrary stage on which the individual releases emotion, where one chooses to enter history from outside in order to perform oneself as a spectacle of time."[62] Although that choice may not be quite as willed as Corrigan implies, the meeting of listener/viewer/performer with history nevertheless suggests something more than simply fitting into the "socially supportive space" Santner delineated. It sets the stage for memories in which desire and yearning mesh with historical recollection and memories that audiences are asked to interact with. In contrast to Kulka's formulation, kitsch can articulate decidedly *un*formulaic emotions. And their overwrought, tacky musical expression is as historiographically compelling as it is generous.

Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin, exterior

Coda

Working the Pieces

What separates us from yesterday is not an abyss but a changed situation.

—ALBERT CAMUS, QUOTED IN *YESTERDAY GIRL*

The manipulation of history is a kind of spoilage, and kitsch is debasement. What may be said of both is that they are almost routine.

—RAUL HILBERG

EMPTY SPACES

When Daniel Libeskind began designing the museum in Berlin to commemorate Jewish victims of the Shoah, he changed the project title from "Extension of the Berlin Museum with the Jewish Museum Department" to "Between the Lines."[1] The change affirms that one cannot add on the experience of Jewish people to rectify or complete German history any more than one can tack on additions to the museums that institutionalize it. His intentions were "to integrate physically and spiritually the meaning of the Holocaust in the consciousness and memory of the city of Berlin. . . . [O]nly through the acknowledgment and incorporation of this erasure and void of Jewish life in Berlin, can the history of Berlin and Europe have a human future."[2] By discarding the prosaic name in favor of the more poetic "Between the Lines," Libeskind draws attention to the limits of desubjectivized representation, even (and especially) when tackling the Shoah. His finished design (1999) illuminates this. Integrating jagged spaces throughout museum rooms, Libeskind homeopathically situated the lost lives and records of the Shoah into the "body" of the official state museum. This history could not be rendered abject; nor could it be kept outside. Libeskind's design interlaces Germany's anti-Semitism and the Shoah with the country's current history, borders, and identity, interrupting the present and refusing it the fiction of self-sufficient unity, or of its tidy separation from the past. Museum staircases lead up to dead ends and nonrooms; museum-goers follow the illogical, frustrating paths Jews were forced to follow during the Shoah. Identity and history become piecemeal

Dead ends and interrupted trajectories in the interior of Libeskind's Jewish Museum

affairs; their continuities and discontinuities constantly address and interrupt one other. It is a stunning architectural achievement, where past and present, presence and nothingness exist simultaneously. Not surprisingly, the Jewish Museum has its detractors. Criticism has tended to gravitate towards its stylized abstraction. But Libeskind is using these abstract forms precisely to make material links between people and historical experience, especially the experiences of those who are lost to most museum-goers today.

In *The New German Cinema,* I have argued that abstract cinematic elements like music and style function in much the same way as Libeskind's architectural design does. Style and music, the materials of cinema's visual and acoustic "surfaces," are what bring traces of histories and experiences forward, presenting the past as so many pieces for us to contextualize and then recontextualize. The point is not to celebrate materiality, but to un-

derstand the conditions and terms that historicize it. The New German films examined here show how concretely music and style can be used to materialize these historical traces and to begin the process of commentary or critique. This can happen when Raben/Fassbinder perform a popular Nazi song on glockenspiels, when Kluge mismatches musical excerpts from one opera with the plot descriptions of others, or when Schroeter turns Viennese waltzes into texts of murderous resignation. These film scores are constantly pointing to lost events, meanings, desires, and patterns of consumption that continue into the present. Their ability to endure can take the form of Kluge's stubborn characters, buried explosives, or the Haydn String Quartet, which runs throughout his work. Scratched, fragmented, poorly recorded, or composed off-form, New German soundtracks tend to shun the ahistoricism and transcendence that post-Romantic western aesthetics bestows upon music, and upon style more generally. Its in-your-face presence gets listeners to hear soundtracks more critically and to consider their concrete, active role in the formation of personal, national, and social histories. This point is driven home with the use of existing music in films that acknowledge the initial allure that the pieces once had, at the same time as they expose their potential harmfulness; consider here *The Power of Emotion*, *Maria Braun*, *Bomber Pilot*, *The Patriot*. De-auraticized, music cannot float around as so much timeless acoustic background. As I have argued, the New German Cinema's continual recontextualizing and manipulation of music establishes that although the pieces are charged with historically contingent meanings, the films are not fully beholden to them. In the end, it is only slightly ironic that by divesting music of its initial historical function, the New German films consolidate its status *as* historical artifact.

One of my main objectives in *The New German Cinema* has been to show that music and style do not depict the past so much as present evidence of it. In that sense, they function much like memory fragments, partial leftovers that can point to something but never be commensurate with it. Like Benjamin's allegorical reading, it is left for people reading, listening, or viewing in the present to do the "filling in," a point directors like Fassbinder, Straub/Huillet, Ottinger, and Kluge echo in interviews. For them, a song, image, or prop functions as a stand-in that gestures toward but does not quite coincide with actual experience. The display and displacement of these trace-objects, then, always exceed any "real event," at the same time that they are always inadequate to it. That lack of representational correspondence has characterized every one of the strategies of remembrance examined here: melodrama/melancholia, traumatic representation, camp, and kitsch.

Thus the stylistic displacements and gaps between experience and representation that the New German Cinema exposes do not cheapen or challenge history so much as show how many histories there are. Even artificial or playful forms like camp or kitsch do not necessarily belittle the stories they tell—although they can, to be sure. When critics perfunctorily degrade these forms, they also degrade the stories they tell, as well as the gays, lesbians, and other constituencies to which these stylistic strategies might speak with special resonance. And so they fail to hear their stories. So, although Raul Hilberg condemns kitsch in the epigraph above, it is important to recall his earlier statement, "The words that are thus written take the place of the past; these words, rather than the events themselves, will be remembered."[3] The danger, I believe, lies in fetishizing the "words" (or images, acts, props, pieces of music) as important in themselves—and that has been the real bone of contention for critics opposed to "overly stylized" treatments of subject matter like the Shoah, World War II, or terrorism. I think that film theorists of the 1980s came close to reaching that point, despite their good intentions. Using representational mismatches and excesses to gauge the politics of a text, they were oblivious to historical context and to cultural, geographical, and other forms of difference. The present study, while no less interested in form and politics, has instead read those mismatches for new interpretive possibilities and as ways to make room for people to engage with history. How, it asks, can different histories be told, and told differently?

EMBODYING HIDDEN HISTORY

The New German Cinema intentionally sought out a variety of lost or different stories and used style and music in ways that *did* tell them differently. These experiences were articulated in feminist melodramas like *Malou*, in the cinema and the theory of Kluge, in films responding to contemporary events, like *Germany in Autumn* or *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*, and in hyperbolized, campy depictions of epochs important to gay culture (*Madame X, Anita: Dances of Vice*). Such moves have been read as examples of "countermemories," a topic that George Lipsitz, recalling the work of Foucault, describes as "a way of remembering and forgetting that starts with the local, the immediate, and the personal. . . . Counter-memory starts with the particular and the specific and then builds outward toward a total story. Counter-memory looks to the past for the hidden histories excluded from dominant narratives."[4] Lipsitz's remark makes clear just how contested and negotiated historical remembrance re-

ally is. It was (and remains) an especially high-stake business for postwar Germany. How to find identity without it? After the war, many German intellectuals argued that their country had an official history of forgetting, of being "unable to mourn." But if that was the case—and this is not to suggest it wasn't—then the only way memory could have been produced at all would be *through* alternate routes, through strategies that deviate from conventional mourning like melancholia, which laments that which is socially suppressed at particular historical junctures. Thanks to the "shameless display" of melancholia and other so-called pathological styles, the New German Cinema helped set the stage for presenting the stories and desires of people who often had no choice but to tell stories differently after the war or to produce, in Lipsitz and Foucault's vocabulary, "counter-memories."

A number of historical reasons help explain why New German filmmakers often turned to self-conscious, heavy-handed style. In contrast to Italy, for example, which had responded *immediately* to the war, examining its experiences through Neorealism, the twenty-year delay it took the German cinema to confront its past may have created the extra room in which more stylized displacements could occur. Its use of feminist or camped-out melodrama to theatricalize war and postwar experiences constituted a massive departure from cinematic predecessors like Italian neorealism, or even the work of East German directors like Wolfgang Staudte. Another conspicuous aspect of New German Cinematic style was its abundance of disfigured and suffering bodies. Why were they so lumpen and deeroticized when the figures inhabiting films with comparable historical aims, like Truffaut's *Le dernier métro* / *The Last Metro* (1980) or Bertolucci's *Il conformista* / *The Conformist* (1970), remained so spectacularly charged?

I argued that the body fragment and wounds of the New German Cinema revealed some of the same somatic anxieties that German intellectuals had articulated about modernity prior to the Second World War. They were also used to underscore the fact that human bodies had a relationship to history, and that both of these things were controlled by material as well as materialist forces. The body also became one of the many sites New German filmmakers used to dramatize these material relationships. Of course, as we have seen, the sheer variety of these bodies necessitated that history and the past be scripted and absorbed quite differently: some embraced them, others repelled them. There were others that tried to retrieve or make good the loss, and others still that just played around with it. Assembled and collagistic, the "body in fragments" is a far more tragic conceit in Kluge, for instance, than in Treut's female hybrids. Human bodies in the

New German Cinema were both active and passive, filled with agency and overwritten with determinism, markers of presence and absence, hopes and hopelessness. Saturated in historical resonance, they often found themselves in an endless string of references and imitations (Maria Braun as Lola, Lola as Lulu, Schygulla as Germany, and so on).

These historically marked bodies dramatize how stylized fragments of the past can provide material for contemporary identity and, in their new articulations, hope for alternatives. They can speak with resonance to gay-, lesbian-, and queer-identified subjectivities, and to subjects inscribed in different configurations of historical, ethnic, national, and class formations. These films demonstrate that the body may be produced by history (or tortured by it, aggrandized, or blown up by it), but like music and film style more generally, it is also productive *of* history. Thus, in the New German films explored here, the body, like a piece of music or any other artifact, both produces and undoes present and past identities, gesturing less to *a* different (e.g., queer, nonwhite, poor, leftist, foreign), unsanctioned identity in Germany than to different *possibilities* of identity.

For film scholars like Johannes von Moltke, Germany's postwar "inability" to remember pretty much necessitated a performative relationship to history. Anton Kaes argued that the horror of Germany's recent history irrevocably denaturalized the idea of national history and history-making. Thomas Elsaesser traced the roots of the exhibitionist style and themes of the movement to the fact that Germans had to perform under the watchful, authoritative eyes of Nazi and then American officials, being viewed and defined from "without," providing historical bases for the stylistic and psychic mechanisms of cinema spectatorship. For Eric Santner, Germany's inability to generate a "socially supportive space" after the war—one that might have conferred legitimacy onto those who *wanted* to remember—could result only in bungled failures. Within that social and historical context, as Olaf Hoerschelmann argues, the New German Cinema was only able to produce a series of "countermemories." It did so, he argues, against a state-sanctioned version of unified national identity formed in response to the terrorist acts rocking the country in the 1970s.[5]

To an extent, this study has also been interested in counterhistories, given its concern with the alternative ways music and style engage with the past and with memory. But instead of adopting the either/or construction of official versus oppositional counterhistories, I want to finally suggest that the New German Cinema is neither fully mainstream (despite its successes) nor fully oppositional. For this reason, disidentification has proved useful in discussing how these films have been received and interpreted. At first glance, disidentification seems indebted to modernist

thought, since it begins by defamiliarizing shopworn, even toxic, artifacts through critically activated rereadings. At the same time, it rejects the modernist assumption that would posit complete complicity, identification, or assimilation on the one hand and fully oppositional critiques or alternatives on the other: it does both, neither, and more. (It challenges modernist-inflected film theory of the late 1970s and 1980s by bringing enjoyment and pleasure into political criticism.) It acknowledges the constant disjuncture between subject, self, and image. Disidentificatory practices like kitsch enable objectionable objects to retain their allure, even as they diminish the power these things may have over us. People are free to critique and to enjoy—a multitasking especially crucial to camp. "Only by fully embracing the stigma itself can one neutralize the sting and make it laughable," writes Esther Newton in a different context.[6] Disidentification helps listeners and viewers to "have some fun" with the materials at hand, as Ralph Locke wrote about classical operatic repertoire. That pleasure can be critically, historically, and politically motivated, much as I have argued about style and music, even at their most beautiful, abject, or disinterested. Because disidentification involves artifacts, readings, and styles that address people as social players of specific historical constituencies, it makes it possible to form alliances at different times and in different ways. Responses are intersubjective, desires shared, enabling people to come together in commonality or in difference. Obviously the stakes are highest for auditors and spectators usually kept away from privilege: queers, women, Jews, victims of military and political aggression, people of color, the poor, the sick, the wounded.

Lipsitz is correct to stress the concrete, "local" nature of countermemory and alternative histories, for they are nothing without their immediate producers and consumers. Yet I would ultimately redirect emphasis away from what he states is their goal of forming new "total histories" (of gays, leftists, etc.) to the diffuse, provisional points of empathy or identification across different social groups over time. In short, while the New German Cinema may have contributed to the "counterhistories" produced in response to dominant histories and policies of its day, the films have outstripped those immediate circumstances. This is not to argue that films of the New German Cinema were uninvolved in the precise historical and political issues of their time—to do so would be absurd. But I don't share the assumption that would have history (of an industry, a director's career, a nation's *Zeitgeist*) be legible only at the point of a film's initial contact with an audience. For, by asserting a special, privileged relationship (of equivalence? reflection?) between a film and its initial historical context, critics restrict what readers of movements like the New German Cinema can do

with it over time: they do not allow its meanings to change *with* history. By contrast, this study maintains that the different settings and circumstances of reception necessarily enable new meanings to be produced for old films.

Thus, as important as the original intentions and points of reference of the New German Cinema are, the movement should not be restricted to them. These films will not always be performing mourning work for *every* viewer in *every* viewing situation, nor will they be raising questions of German identity with exclusive view to the Shoah, the war, 1970s terrorism, or an official concept of nation. It has done these things, to be sure, but from the vantage point of the early twenty-first century, its various "strategies of remembrance" unveil a tapestry of histories and ideas that were unthinkable before the advent of, for example, queer criticism. That widened historical scope, as Theodore Fiedler says in relation to Kluge's work, "encourages viewers to think of that relation [i.e., to the past] in situational rather than apocalyptic terms."[7] A chief accomplishment of the New German Cinema is thus that it demonstrated that history is a work in progress contingent upon the desires of groups and individuals. Post-1990s queer readings of *Madame X*, for instance, raise altogether different questions than German feminist readings of it did in the 1970s (and even then the film, which was being measured against what it was *supposed* to do as "feminist" art, was no stranger to interpretive dissent). Scholars today are queering Fassbinder's work, whereas gay critics in the 1970s met it with open hostility; Kluge and Schroeter's interest in opera has been taken up by contemporary critical opera scholars, and so on.

STRATEGIES OF REMEMBRANCE: OUTSIDE THE TEXT

It has become something of a cliché in theoretical circles to claim that identity is performative. This is so even if we transport the assertion from the realm of gender to that of national identity—or even to the nature of history itself. Yes, German history—the one that produced *Hitler, a Movie*—is performative. Yes, Germany has an especially charged relationship to memory and forgetting, as well as to official and overlooked histories. And given the losses and turmoil that defined the initial context of the New German Cinema, it is hardly surprising that we encounter such excesses as the flamboyant costumes of Ottinger's characters, the melodramatic outbursts of Fassbinder's, or the endless fire, ice, and wind in Kluge. But it is not simply the New German Cinema's performativity or defamiliarized flamboyance that accounts for its musical, stylistic, and historiographic so-

phistication. There are also the intensely material ways in which the movement staged its stories using the different stylistic strategies I have outlined here. There are also its incomplete and irresolvable stories—another way to create gaps that incite viewers and listeners to "find a way in."

Clearly, desire and feelings are crucial to the forms of stylistic remembrance discussed here, in melodramatic and melancholic acting out, traumatic representation, modified modernist precepts, and camp and kitsch aesthetics. In a sense, the intensity of these stylized appeals shows the impossibility of their own project. People cannot merge with others, the present does not fit like a glove over the past, resolution is fictive, history is not to be found through a single lens of nation. If the lack of resolution or of a perfect "fit" leads to representational deficiency, displacement, or distortion, it does not, I believe, lead to spectatorial disengagement or alienation, as film critics in the 1980s might have argued. In fact, it is in these imperfect interstices that coalition-building can best occur. Here is where listeners momentarily empathize with one another. When Elsaesser observed that the use of sound in *Maria Braun* "locates the action not so much in a period as in the idea of a period,"[8] he stresses the importance of our emotional and mental involvement in "making" history. In *Malou*, "Ein kleines Franzeschen" and Raben's score in general illuminated the constant intersections of past and present and how enmeshed past and present subjectivities actually are. The lack of one-to-one relationships between music/image and referent, or between film character and filmgoer, demonstrates that there is more than one way to engage with a film. And in the same way, films offer more than one way to engage with history.

One of the ways that the New German Cinema exceeded its immediate historical reference points was by refusing to supply its protagonists with diegetic situations that satisfied their stated goals or needs. Films of the movement are not generally known for their happy endings, nor even for much sense of resolution *(Herr R, Madame X, Bomber Pilot)*. Relationships, economic conditions, and social and legal prejudices transformed the desire for would-be character traits into little more than pure yearning. In melodramatic and traumatic representation, characters were disabled by their hopes, or their lack of them, and did not receive the recognition of other characters, as they might have had in more conventional melodramas. Yet, even in the New German melodrama's refusal to supply a diegetic space in which their experiences could be acknowledged, they conferred that function onto filmgoers. This is an important feature of these films. Kluge's traumatic representation, also organized around loss and suffering, insisted in similar ways on giving witness, even if some of the stories were not as open to alterity as one might wish. Camp and kitsch gave hopes, fan-

tasies, and desires more heightened articulation still. Continually depsychologizing their characters, all of these films—and especially the campy and kitschy ones—made it clear just how important acting out was in articulating stories, expressing desire, and piquing filmgoers' feelings in order to start making connections. Camp runs with the notion of unstated and undervalued desires; kitsch, or at least Schroeter's brand of it, also appeals to otherness but goes even further in its embrace of the abject, toxic forms associated with it, refuting unity and purity at all sorts of levels—in the realm of aesthetics, human emotion and desire, textuality, and national and personal identity. Like Fassbinder's and Kluge's work, *Bomber Pilot* doesn't provide its characters with the means to "work through" their disabling pasts, but rather shows us the mechanisms by which that work might be done. The stories and subjectivities to which all of these films gesture are thus not pitched in a single fashion, nor are they restricted to West German audiences of the 1970s or 1980s.

As Santner argued, successful psychic/social homeopathy requires two things: imbibing small, apportioned doses of the poisonous material into the body and a socio-historical context that encourages that process. This socially supportive space is where de-auraticized, empathetic gazes (and ears) would stand witness and validate the experience and memory of others. To an extent, this scenario describes the conditions beginning to emerge in Germany as the New German Cinema developed, and is one that I believe the films try to replicate through textual means. It is important to acknowledge here the range of people who could have taken up positions of bereavement or guilt, as well as those who might have been able to bestow compassion or empathy. I am not trying to relativize victimhood here, but rather to argue that listeners (or observers) and performing subjects may actually come together today—through empathy or through fleeting, disidentifactory alliances—and that *both* groups are constituted out of abject, toxic elements and experience. Who, as I have repeatedly asked, is the "we" that the New German Cinema and its critics presumed? Is it the majoritarian subjects of privilege, purportedly unafflicted with abjection? Why do certain theorists assume that a "we" bestows subjectivity onto others, or validates the testimony "they" give? The abjection that Schroeter turns on its head implicates all listeners with the *Kulturscheisse,* self-abnegation, and nasty ideas he presents: xenophobic racism in *Bomber Pilot* and *Palermo oder Wolfsburg*; masculinist oppression in *Maria Malibran* and *Willow Springs*. He also shows the ongoing *allure* of those abject ideas, be this through Romanticism's excesses or through opera's fabulously unattainable divas. He illuminates how difficult it is *not* to project abjection onto others, a point that has led me to highlight the idea of the other-

within, or the "unwanted within the wanted," even in reference to Libeskind's architectural design.

Like Schroeter's abjection from within and Santner's homeopathic healing, Muñoz's concept of disidentification addresses how people are bombarded with representations that speak to them, for them, and simultaneously do not convey anything about them at all—a point forcefully made when he discusses the more egregious stereotypes of minoritarian groups. Acknowledging the poisonous connotations and effects of these sounds and images (consider the music associated with Noa Noa), however, does not necessarily do away with the affect, or even pleasure, that the objects may have generated. In fact, Muñoz concentrates on just how that affect is carried along with these stranded, toxic objects, often in the form of a critically aware, problematic affection. This is what leads me to argue for the importance of introjection in the work of Schroeter, Ottinger, and others. By extending the sense of self outward as it stages its appeals to others, introjection doesn't encrypt loss or its stranded objects so much as throw them into scenes with intensity, giving them form as so many props, bodies, or pieces of music. Introjection stresses the personal, emotional attachments to objects, and its ongoing emotional connections to them do not freeze them into hermetically sealed bodies. Instead, they are placed on stage for audiences.

GHOSTS IN THE FILM MACHINE

Like allegory, melancholia, melodrama, revisited modernism, traumatic representation, camp, and kitsch all stamp the cinema with a material presence that is simultaneously an absence: there is something that it does not let go of. Of course, that "material ghost" has haunted meditations about photographic and acoustic recording even before the advent of film. Film critics from Bazin, Barthes, and Sontag to Gilberto Perez, from whom the phrase is taken, participate in that tradition. For them, cinema's ghostly traces are left by profilmic events (the portrait of a now-departed soul, a once-performed scene) physically etched onto and fused with celluloid. My argument, by contrast, is that the physical remnants in which film trades deal less with events that unfolded in front of the camera than with historically and psychically charged artifacts, which the New German Cinema used to trigger memory and invite connections to the conditions and experiences of other people. Even items that seem as historically cemented as the swastikas at the opening of *Bomber Pilot* do not "give" us the past so much as plop it into a contemporary mise-en-scène and ask us to make

something of it. As I noted in Chapter One, if a photograph only provides ghostly/material representations for viewers to cling to, music is even less capable of fixing a concrete object or reference.

Although the representational strategies I explore in this book acknowledge that one cannot recover the past or rectify its losses, I believe it is important not to lose them a second time. In that regard, I wrote *The New German Cinema* not just to draw attention to the extraordinary uses of music and sound in films of this period, nor just to keep discussions on the Shoah alive. I wanted also to revisit a cinema movement that has fallen out of vogue in film studies.[9] The same "unwanted within the wanted" it seems to represent also impelled me to explore textual style at a time when some scholars consider textual analysis to be passé or relentlessly, eternally ahistorical.

Clearly I disagree with those views, and with the historical assumptions behind them. Instead, I believe that what the New German Cinema finally offers is not a clear-cut portrayal of history or nation but different perspectives on forging them. As Thomas Elsaesser has observed, film movements like the New German Cinema are less involved in the project of constructing national identity than a historical imaginary.[10] And if the movement seems now to have itself become a trace, the physical pieces and traces it initially used—the music, the style—continue to shape us. Not unlike Libeskind's gaps moving "between the lines," these pieces are neither here nor there, but produce spaces in which past and present histories commingle. This is where different constituencies can find themselves, in similarity and in difference, now, and in so many places, *after* the New German Cinema.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. Of the term *Aufarbeitung*, Adorno writes: "In this usage 'working through the past' does not mean seriously working upon the past, that is, through a lucid consciousness breaking its power to fascinate. On the contrary, its intention is to close the books on the past and, if possible, even remove it from memory." Theodor Adorno, "The Meaning of Working Through the Past," in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 89. Curiously, the more common *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* connotes a greater sense of conquest than *Aufarbeitung*. See also the translator's note, 337–38, n. 1.

2. Barton Byg, *Landscapes of Resistance: The German Films of Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 51.

3. Writing in the early 1990s, like Karban, it would have been difficult to be upbeat about Germany's film scoring situation. Unlike France, Germany had no taxation system on ticket prices to help finance composers. Producers rarely put much money into music budgets, and up to 40 percent of a film composer's pay, according to Karban, went toward GEMA (Germany's equivalent of ASCAP in the United States). Thomas Karban, "En Allemagne," *CinémAction* 62 (January 1992): 188–95, esp. 189.

4. Joseph Straus, *Remaking the Past: Musical Modernism and the Influence of the Tonal Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

5. Tomas Kulka, *Kitsch and Art* (University State Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).

6. The original reference is to *Papaskino*. English accounts, however, refer both to *Papaskino* (cinema of our fathers) and to *Opaskino* (grandfathers). Compare, for example, Eric Rentschler, who in 1988 refers to "Papa's Cinema," but in 1981/2 speaks of "Opaskino." Compare *West German Filmmakers on Film: Visions and Voices* (New York: Holmes and Meier), 1, with "American Friends and the New German Cinema: Patterns of Reception," *New German Critique* 24/5 (fall/winter 1981/82), 17. For the purposes of this study, I refer

to a *Papaskino* because the *Jungfilmer,* like other artists and intellectuals of their generation, criticized the acts of their parents' generation, often plumbing their "grandfathers' " generation for positive role models, like Eisner and Vertov.

7. Thomas Elsaesser, " 'It started with these images'—Some Notes on Political Filmmaking after Brecht in Germany: Helke Sander and Harun Farocki," *Discourse* 7 (1985), 95–120.

8. See the work of scholars working in North America, like Anton Kaes, Timothy Corrigan, Richard McCormick, and Barbara Kosta, and in Europe, Elsaesser and Julia Knight.

9. Eric Santner, *Stranded Objects: Mourning, Memory, and Film in Postwar Germany* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 23.

10. Thomas Elsaesser, "Historicizing the Subject: A Body of Work?" *New German Critique* 63 (fall 1994), 33. See also Fredric Jameson, who believes Syberberg's *Our Hitler* should not be considered as mourning work: "The trauma of loss does not, however, seem a very apt way to characterize present-day Germany's relationship to Hitler; Syberberg's operative analogy here is rather with the requiem as an art form, in which grief is redemptively transmuted into jubilation." *Signatures of the Visible* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 233 n. 2.

11. Elsaesser, "Historicizing the Subject," 15.

12. English-language exceptions include, among others, David Bathrick, "Inscribing History, Prohibiting and Producing Desire: Fassbinder's *Lili Marleen,*" *New German Critique* 63 (1994), 34–53; Timothy Corrigan, "Werner Schroeter's Operatic Cinema," *Discourse* 3 (spring 1981), 46–59; Gertrud Koch, "Alexander Kluge's Phantom of the Opera," *New German Critique* 49 (winter 1990), 79–88; and sections of Elsaesser's *Fassbinder's Germany: History, Identity, Subject* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996); and Byg's *Landscapes of Resistance.* Australian scholar Roger Hillman has written several essays, including an excellent analysis of *The Marriage of Maria Braun* in "Narrative, Sound, and Film: Fassbinder's *The Marriage of Maria Braun,*" in *Fields of Vision: Essays in Film Studies, Visual Anthropology, and Photography,* ed. L. Devereaux and R. Hillman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 181–95. In Germany, Norbert Jürgen Schneider's full-length study remains the definitive work on music and the movement. See his *Handbuch Filmmusik: Musikdramaturgie im Neuen Deutschen Film* (Munich: Ölschläger, 1986).

13. Walter Benjamin, "Thesis on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* (New York: Schocken, 1969), 263.

14. Miriam Hansen, "Introduction," *New German Critique* 49 (winter 1990), 10.

15. The second movement, the "Kaiserhymn," written after Haydn's exposure to English music, was later integrated into Haydn's string quartet, 1797 (op. 76 no. 3). Having served as the national anthem for Austria as well as Germany (as it would continue to do after the war), the piece is multiply inscribed with nationalist fervor. Albrecht Rietmüller observes that the piece did not

even require the notorious "Deutschland über alles" lyrics to produce such a reading (the "Deutschlandlied" was first penned in 1841 as the "Lied der Deutschen").

Rietmüller maintains that the music alone conveys powerful nationalist connotations, like flags ("other textless symbols") (327). From the piece's beginnings, he notes, the British interpreted it as an homage to their own anthem, "God Save the King." The following was written when Haydn received an honorary doctorate from Oxford in the 1790s: "The Divine Hymne, written for your imperial master, in imitation of our loyal song, 'God save great George our King,' and set so admirably to music by yourself, I have translated and adapted to your melody, which is simple, grave, applicating, and pleasing." Quoted in Riethmueller, " 'Gott! erhalte': National Anthems and the Semantics of Music," in *Word and Music Studies: Defining the Field,* ed. W. Bernhardt, S. P. Scher, and W. Wolf (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), 324.

16. Jameson, *Signatures of the Visible,* 68.

17. Thomas Elsaesser, "Myth as the Phantasmagoria of History: H. J. Syberberg, Cinema and Representation," *New German Critique* 24/5 (fall/winter, 1981/2), 152.

18. Fassbinder's selection is in ironic contrast to the typical humanist reception of the work. Compare to Ernst Bloch, who said, "From Marx we know what can be done; from Beethoven we know what we can hope for." Quoted by his son, Professor Jan Bloch, "Ernst Bloch in Exile," lecture at the University of Florida, 4 October 1988.

19. Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 128.

20. Sigmund Freud, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* ed. James Strachey, vol. 10 (London: Hogarth, 1953–74), 206 n. 1.

21. Examples include Fassbinder's remake of Jutzi's 1929 *Mother Kusters fahrt ins Glück,* Sanders-Brahms's politicized maternal melodrama *Germany, Pale Mother,* Jutta Brückner's *Hungerjahre* / *Hunger Years* (1980), Reitz's return to the *Heimat* genre, and the movement's scattered references to melodramatic icons like Zarah Leander.

22. That significant exception is Rosa von Praunheim, who remains self-identified as gay and not queer.

23. The study, for instance, does not examine East German films, or much nonfiction or nonfeature work. It has its inevitable imbalances, devoting more time to Fassbinder and Kluge, say, than to Straub and Wenders, whose innovative use of music merits further study.

24. Rentschler, "American Friends and the New German Cinema." In this meticulously researched essay, Rentschler charges U.S. media and film festival circuits of "co-opting" only a small fragment of the movement, of turning directors into stars, of divesting material of politicized content, and of being insensitive to the larger initial context in which these films appeared.

25. Raul Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory: The Journey of a Holocaust Historian* (Chicago: Ivan Dee, 1996), 83.

26. Art Spiegelman, *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* (New York: Pantheon). Volume 1, "My Father Bleeds History," published 1986; volume 2, "And Here My Troubles Began," published 1991.

27. "Representations of History in Films by S. Schönemann, H. Farocki and M. Verhoeven," lecture presented at the Goethe Institute, Toronto, 15 November 1998.

CHAPTER 1: MOURNING, MELANCHOLIA, AND "NEW GERMAN MELODRAMA"

1. Edgar Reitz, "Arbeiten un unseren Erinnerungen," *Medium* 5, no. 79 (May 1979), 21–22.

2. Elie Wiesel, "Trivializing the Holocaust: Semi-Fact and Semi-Fiction," *New York Times* (16 April 1978), section 2, p. 1.

3. For an account, see Renate Möhrmann, "'Germany, Pale Mother': On the Mother Figures in New German Women's Film," in *Women in German Yearbook 11*, ed. S. Friedrichsmeyer and P. Herminghouse (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 67–80.

4. Recently, melodrama has been considerably reconfigured as a generic, industrial and (trans)national phenomenon. The 1980s understanding of melodrama was thus demarcated by certain assumptions and interests dominating film studies—and production—at the time. Some of the reigning defining characteristics of melodrama of the time, like its domestic setting, its female-centeredness, or its relative inattention to action, have been brought into question. See essays in J. Bratton et al., *Melodrama: Stage/Picture/Screen* (London: British Film Institute, 1994); and Christine Gledhill's "Rethinking Genre," in *Reinventing Film Studies*, ed. C. Gledhill and L. Williams (London: Arnold, 2000), 221–43. To situate the New German Cinema within this historical context, I will be using the 1980s conception of melodrama, which gravitates towards domestic family dramas in (primarily) English-language cinema of the 1930s to 1950s. My aim is to examine the historically coincident obsession with excess and ideology in melodrama studies at the time, when interest in the New German Cinema was high.

5. The term is from Gilberto Perez, *The Material Ghost: Films and Their Medium* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

6. Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1976); and David Grimsted, "Melodrama as Echo of the Historically Voiceless," in *Anonymous Americans: Explorations in Nineteenth-Century Social History*, ed. Tamara Hareven (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1971), 80.

7. Richard McCormick, *Politics of the Self: Feminism and the Postmodern in West German Literature and Film* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991).

8. Thomas Elsaesser, "Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Melodrama," in *Home Is Where the Heart Is*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: British Film Institute, 1987), 51.

9. Elsaesser, "Tales of Sound and Fury," 50.

10. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, "Minnelli and Melodrama," in Gledhill, ed., *Home Is Where the Heart Is*, 73.

11. Raben's collaborations with Fassbinder extend beyond his role as composer. The two also worked together as theatrical directors and actors. In fact, it was Raben who, as director of the Anti-Theatre ensemble in Munich, first introduced Fassbinder to the group (of which he soon took charge) in the mid-1960s.

12. That same year, Fassbinder's mother, Liselotte Eder, had a different version successfully pulled from circulation. That version, fifteen minutes shorter, had been authorized by Raben, who had replaced the U.S. and Canadian songs with his own compositions. For a critical account of Raben on the matter, see Michael Töteberg, "Wie man einem film verstümmelt," *Taz* Berlin, 21 June 1990. After the death of Eder, Fassbinder's young editor and partner Juliane Lorenz continued to contest Raben's claims concerning authorized film versions and compensation for his work in this and other films. In the mid 1990s a court awarded Fassbinder's estate full royalties for the songs for which Fassbinder wrote the lyrics and Raben the music, and it is possible that Fassbinder's films may be scored anew. The turf wars between Raben's and Fassbinder's estate-holders seem to have been sparked in part when Raben was the finance officer of the Anti-Theatre's X films, a task he seems to have performed with less skill than his composing.

13. Russell Potter, "Not the Same: Race, Repetition, and Difference in Hip-Hop and Dance Music," in *Mapping the Beat: Popular Music and Contemporary Theory*, ed. T. Swiss et al. (London: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 31–45; and James Snead, "Repetition as a Figure of Black Culture," in *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, ed. R. Ferguson et al. (New York and Boston: Museum of Contemporary Art and Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1990), 212–30.

14. This is dramatically exemplified in his uncredited score for Uli Lommel's *Zärtlichkeit der Wöofe / The Tenderness of Wolves* (1973). Raben chops the music of Bach into astonishingly short passages and orchestrates it in such a way so that it more closely resembles his own work than Bach's, adding another layer of historical context to a text already brimming with overlapping, intergenerational references.

15. Christian Braad Thomsen, *Fassbinder: The Life and Work of a Provocative Genius* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), 102, 107–8.

16. Norbert Jürgen Schneider, *Handbuch Filmmusik I*, 109. Schneider's conclusions on this point differ from my own. According to him, music fulfills its standard role as "co-worker and assistant" to film narration, albeit more intensely, in Fassbinder's melodrama. "Where it involved the emphasis of a feeling everything was placed on this point [of emotional intensification]: dialogue, frame, sounds, colour, music. Measureless according to the aesthetics of many filmmakers, and correctly following the principles of melodrama, music narrates and illustrates alongside the film narration—as an even more intensive co-worker / assistant. This is how entire epics rose—like the music from

Berlin Alexanderplatz, his most important work, where the experience of over thirty commonly-fashioned films could be incorporated." (188)

17. Fassbinder was very aware of this, according to Raben. In an interview with me, Raben discussed the director's fascination with redemption—that melodramatic moment of recognition, the secular affirmation by the other—and his obsession with liturgical music that might point to that redemptive possibility (Munich, 8 July 1998).

18. Paul Coates, *The Gorgon's Gaze: German Cinema, Expressionism, and the Image of Horror* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 232–33.

19. Peer Raben, "Musique et film, la cantate de Bach dans l'érable," *CinémAction* (1984), 126, 125.

20. Judith Mayne, "Fassbinder and Spectatorship," *New German Critique* 12 (1977), 61–74.

21. Quoted in Christian-Albrecht Gollub, "Transcending the Genres: Volker Schlöndorff and Margarethe von Trotta," in *New German Filmmakers,* ed. Klaus Phillips (New York: Ungar, 1984), 298.

22. Barbara Kosta, *Recasting Autobiography: Women's Counterfictions in Contemporary German Literature and Film* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994).

23. Möhrmann, " 'Germany, Pale Mother,' " 78.

24. Ibid., 77–78.

25. See the work of Sabine Hake, Miriam Hansen, Julia Knight, Gertrud Koch, Barbara Kosta, Susan Linville, Richard McCormick, Renata Möhrmann, Heide Schlüpmann, Marc Silberman, and others for discussions of the textual strategies used by female filmmakers at the time and the material conditions in which they worked.

26. After Sander relinquished editorship of the journal, its offices were dispersed across several cities. As Miriam Hansen observes in her historical overview of *frauen und film*, by 1983 the Berlin and Frankfurt offices represented different approaches; the former producing a journal of film criticism, the latter one of theoretical inquiry. See Hansen's "Messages in a Bottle?" *Screen* 28, no. 4 (1987), 30–39.

27. I borrow this observation from Mary Ann Doane, *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 30.

28. Barton Byg, "German History and Cinematic Convention Harmonised in Margarethe von Trotta's Marianne and Juliane," in *Gender and German Cinema: Feminist Interventions,* vol. 2, ed. S. Frieden et al. (Providence, R.I.: Berg, 1993), 265.

29. Marc Silberman, *German Cinema: Texts in Context* (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1997), 202.

30. Charlotte Delorme, "On the Film *Marianne and Juliane* by Margarethe von Trotta," trans. Ellen Seiter, *Journal of Film and Video* 37 (Spring 1985), 51. Originally published in *frauen und film* 31 (1982). U.S. critic Seiter's own critique of the film, "The Political is Personal," appears in the same issue of *Journal of Film and Video*, 41–46. She condemns "the terrorist actions of Marianne portrayed as personal tragedy."

31. Schneider, *Handbuch Filmmusik I*, 265; 265; 263.

32. The song, composed by Peer Raben, tells the story of a French woman in a foreign country unable to get home, where she longs to be. Ingrid Caven sings it in both German and French, and its reprise is:

Little French woman
In a strange land
She wants to fly homeward
But her wings are burned.
So she wanders through the streets
That are made of memories
Secretly weeping in alleys
A little lost child.

33. Schneider, *Handbuch Filmmusik I*, 107.

34. Elsaesser, *Fassbinder's Germany*, 145.

35. Ibid., 152.

36. Interview, 8 July 1998. Schmid thought it would convey the idea of "heaven" in the mind of the (autobiographically based) boy in his film, confirming Raben's view of the song.

37. Thomsen, *Fassbinder*, 294.

38. Ibid., 296.

39. Saul Friedlander, *Reflections of Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 47.

40. Elsaesser, *Fassbinder's Germany*, 150.

41. Bathrick, "Inscribing History," 34–53.

42. Friedlander quotes Goebbels's reference as "a melodramatic song on top of a macabre dance," in *Reflections of Nazism*, 40.

43. Personal conversation, April/May 1995.

44. Coates, *The Gorgon's Gaze*, 139. Eco borrows the line from Hermann Broch. When interviewed, Raben said of Fassbinder, "It takes a lot of bravery to depict things simply, because that can get you labeled easily as kitsch" (interview, Munich, 8 July 1998)—not necessarily a bad thing for Raben, who greatly respects Schroeter's "kitsch for kitsch's sake." But where Raben perceives simplicity—and as noted above, some of his own compositions are deceptively uncomplicated—others, like Coates, see only the tinkering with empty, vicious signs. That perspective forms the basis of Friedlander's criticism of the "new discourse on Nazism" in European films of the late 1970s and early 1980s. In addition to appropriating Nazism's more conspicuous, clichéd signs—goose-stepping, swastikas—he argues that this cinema either banalized or normalized these signs, or transformed them into part of a seductive spectacle that replicated rather than renounced fascism's own mechanisms.

45. Coates, *The Gorgon's Gaze*, 140.

46. Elsaesser, *Fassbinder's Germany*, 57. Compare with Fassbinder's remarks about the comic elements of *Die dritte Generation* / *The Third Generation* (1979): "I hope then, beyond the laughter, a kind of shock happens to the viewer [he calls it a shock of recognition]. Because this is basically not funny." Quoted in Imke Lode, "Terrorism, Sadomasochism, and Utopia in Fassbinder's *Third Generation*," in *Perspectives on German Cinema*, ed. T. Ginsberg and

K. M. Thompson (New York: G. K. Hall, 1996), 427. Contradictory statements abound in Fassbinder's own written and oral testimony. In an interview he gave with Margit Carstensen just after shooting *Martha,* he stated, "Most men simply can't oppress as perfectly as women would really like," to the understandable outrage of his female star. Quoted in Thomsen, *Fassbinder,* 137.

47. Leo Bersani, "Is the Rectum a Grave?" *October* 43 (1987), 208.

48. Thomsen, *Fassbinder,* 212.

49. Ibid., 239.

50. Quoted in Thomsen, *Fassbinder,* 210–11.

51. In addition to Rickels and Butler's efforts to depathologize melancholia, see the work of Corey Creekmur, "The Cinematic Photograph and the Possibility of Mourning," *Wide Angle* 9, no. 1 (1986), 41–49; Caryl Flinn, "Music and the Melodramatic Past of the New German Cinema," in *Melodrama: Stage/Picture/Screen,* ed. J. Bratton et al. (London: British Film Institute, 1994), 106–18; Peggy Phelan, *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories* (London: Routledge, 1997); Kathleen Woodward, "Freud and Barthes: Theorizing Mourning, Sustaining Grief," *Discourse* 13, no. 1 (1990/1): 93–110, later developed in *Aging and Its Discontents: Freud and Other Fictions* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); and, most recently, José E. Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999). As for its important place in queer studies, Butler associates melancholia with a [hetero]normative pathology, Muñoz argues for its importance as a form of queer intervention into identity/disidentity formations.

52. "Mourning and Melancholia," in *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* vol. 14, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), 243. Subsequent references are in the text.

53. Quoted in Laurence Rickels, *Aberrations of Mourning: Writing on German Crypts* (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1988), 335.

54. See n. 51.

55. These remarks recall Freud's observation that hysterics possess a "double insight" that enables them to observe as they participate within a scene.

That more positive special status, however understated in "Mourning and Melancholia," leads Juliana Schiesari to place Freud within a discursive tradition that aligns melancholic temperaments with dark, romantic forms of *masculine* creativity (*The Gendering of Melancholia: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Symbolics of Loss in Renaissance Literature* [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992]). Freud, for his part, does not pursue the issue in any depth in the essay, arguing instead that the "fundamental truth" observed by melancholics is that of their own egoistic powerlessness and weakness. (Alternatively, that "truth" might be read as a way to acknowledge how the self is continually adapting itself to losses throughout its history.)

56. Santner, *Stranded Objects,* 21.

57. Santner, *Stranded Objects,* 151. The emphasis on "solution" is my own.

58. Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies,* vol. 2 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 210–25; see also 263–65.

59. Parveen Adams, "Waiving the Phallus," *Differences* 4, no. 1 (1992), 78.

60. Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *L'écorce et le noyau* (Paris: Aubier-Flammarion, 1978), esp. 259–75. Discussed in Ned Lukacher, *Primal Scenes: Literature, Philosophy, Psychoanalysis* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986), 88–90.

61. Jacques Derrida, foreword to Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonomy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), xvi. Derrida's foreword gives a useful summary of the history of these terms.

62. Ibid.

63. Santner, *Stranded Objects*, 125.

64. Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993), 1.

65. Elsaesser, *Fassbinder's Germany*, 131.

66. Quoted in and translated by Elsaesser, *New German Cinema: A History* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 310.

67. Over the 1990s, the Society for Cinema Studies conferences in North America ran fewer and fewer panels on the New German Cinema—by the year 2000, none were held. In 1997, the fifth edition of Bordwell and Thompson's mass-selling textbook, *Film Art*, the "New German Cinema" was dropped from its survey of significant film movements, replaced by the "New Hollywood Film," for reasons of marketability. (The fourth edition, in which the movement was discussed, was published in 1993.)

68. Elsaesser, *Fassbinder's Germany*, 147.

69. Since the late 1980s, melodrama's special relationship to "excess"—insofar as excess was conceived as an aberration of narrative norms—has been replaced by terms like "sensation" and "sensationalism," terms that have been elaborated by historians like Linda Williams, Ben Singer, and Tom Gunning.

70. Linda Williams, "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess," *Film Quarterly* 44 (spring 1991), 2–13.

71. Coates, *The Gorgon's Gaze*, 232–33. My italics.

72. Perez, *Material Ghost*, 9.

73. Coates, *The Gorgon's Gaze*, 233. Coates astutely notes that melodrama, "founded on serial accumulation," is entirely in keeping with the ideology of colonialist expansionism and the rise of commodity culture during the mid- and late-nineteenth century, the heyday of Victorian melodrama.

74. Woodward, *Aging and Its Discontents*, 117.

75. Although he stresses the importance of empathetically embracing alterity—something obviously impossible in fascist regimes—Santner never establishes the identity of "the" German mourner. Susan Linville rightly argues that this leaves us with a de facto male subject under discussion, one whose sexuality, ethnicity, class, nation, and location are equally "unmarked." See her excellent *Feminism, Film, Fascism: Women's Autobiographical Film in Postwar Germany* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998).

76. I am indebted to Alan Wright for his observations on this topic.

77. Michael Schneider, "Fathers and Sons, Retrospectively: The Damaged Relationship between Two Generations," *New German Critique* 31, nos. 16/18 (1984), 43.

78. Elsaesser, "Tales of Sound and Fury," 49.

CHAPTER 2: MODERNISM'S AFTERSHOCKS

1. Theodor Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 129.

2. We see this staged in the cinema in a brief scene of Ken Russell's *Mahler* (1974) that parodies Visconti's hagiographic *Death in Venice* (1971), whose soundtrack is dominated by the adagio movements of the Third and Fifth Symphonies. In Russell's wordless and enormously comic scene, a look-alike of Visconti's Tadzio moves sensually along the beach as we hear the Mahler briefly played.

3. Schneider, *Handbuch Filmmusik*, 189.

4. Mahler's music appears in, among others, *Chinese Roulette, Bolweiser, In a Year with Thirteen Moons, Berlin Alexanderplatz*, and *Lili Marleen.*

5. See Romain Goldron, *Du romantisme à l'expressionisme* (Lausanne: Éditions Rencontre, 1966), 92–95.

6. Peer Raben, "Musik-Shock." Musik und Film Viennale Symposium, Vienna, Gesellschaft für film und medien, 28 April–1 May 1995.

7. Peer Raben, "Musique et film," 127.

8. Alexander Kluge, "On Film and the Public Sphere," *New German Critique* 24/5 (1981/2), 206. He has stated even more pointedly, "We are not postmodernists," in an interview with Stuart Liebman, special issue of *October* 46 (1988), 57. See also Miriam Hansen's work and, especially, Peter Lutze, *Alexander Kluge: The Last Modernist* (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1998), which persuasively argues for Kluge's modernist sensibility.

9. Odön von Horváth (1901–38) was an Austrian playwright of Hungarian origin whose work enjoyed considerable success in the early 1930s and was rediscovered in the late 1960s and early 1970s, during the time of Willy Brandt. Like Fassbinder's work, his plays dealt with the problems of common people, and he refused to present his characters in a sentimental or positive light, preferring to stress the violence, self-serving motives, and breaches of honor among them. Also like Fassbinder, von Horváth worked in an anti-illusionistic style, using setting, language, and dialect to great effect. He would usually substantially alter standard theatrical forms, disrupting act structure or cohesive time frames.

10. I chose the term "*politicized* modernism" to highlight modernist endeavors that worked toward progressive change. "Political modernism" is a highly contested term, particularly in relation to concepts like "modernism" or "avant-garde," and the historical phenomenon of "modernity." Peter Bürger, for instance, equates "political modernism" with the avant-garde movements after the First World War and into the 1920s, as art became cognizant of its functionlessness and examined conditions of distribution, exhibition, and con-

sumption. Modernism, by contrast, for Bürger, restricted itself to aesthetic and formal innovation.

Modernist *film* generally describes two groups: prewar and interwar practices—usually illustrated by European avant-garde cinema—and cinemas that emerged after the Second World War, predominantly Japanese and European. In those senses, modernist film was, among other things, a reaction against the globally dominant Classical Hollywood cinema and, in its postwar incarnation, against the fascist/nationalist or propagandistic functions to which film had recently been yoked. "*Political* modernism" describes post-1968 film practices in Europe, Latin America, and elsewhere. These cinemas were modeled after the *politicized* modernist work from before the war, e.g., Godard's openly acknowledged debts to Vertov and Brecht; the agit-prop and collective filmmaking important in the New Latin American Cinema, etc. See D. N. Rodowick, *The Crisis of Political Modernism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988) for an extended discussion of postwar "political modernism" as a cinematic, theoretical, and political phenomenon.

11. Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 18.

12. Raben, "Musik-Shock."

13. Levin cites as examples Walter Benjamin's notion of "revolutionary nihilism" and "positive barbarism" and Siegfried Kracauer's appeal to the "revelation of the negative." See his Introduction to Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 20.

14. Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 80 (my emphasis).

15. Quoted in Maud Lavin, "Photomontage, Mass Culture, and Modernity: Utopianism in the Circle of New Advertising Designers," in *Montage and Modern Life: 1919–1942*, ed. M. Teitelbaum (Boston: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1992), 53.

16. Teitelbaum, ed., *Montage and Modern Life*, 8.

17. Hanns Eisler, *Hanns Eisler, a Rebel in Music: Selected Writings*, ed. Manfred Grabs (New York: International Publishers, 1978), 59, 61.

18. Russolo was the inventor of what he called "Noise Intoners" (*Intonarumori*). The quote is from "The Art of Noises" and appears in Joseph Lanza, *Elevator Music: A Surreal History of Muzak, Easy-Listening and Other Moodsong* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1994), 15.

19. Quoted in Lanza, *Elevator Music*, 15.

20. Quoted in Eisler, *A Rebel in Music*, 49.

21. Kurt Weill, *Speak Low (When You Speak Love): The Letters of Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya*, ed. Lys Symonette and Kim Kowalke (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 30.

22. Discussed in Lanza, *Elevator Music*, 15.

23. To be sure, there were different motivations for these groups. Music publishers, for instance, embraced the deauratization of music not for social or political reasons but for the larger audiences promised through new modes of transmission.

24. Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 94.

25. The neoclassicists of the 1920s (Stravinsky, Hindemith) offer one of the strongest examples of those who repudiated the emotionalism and subjectivity of Romanticism. Neoclassicism emphasized structure, surface, and formal clarity over expressive depths and, as their name suggests, its composers skipped past the Romantics for their inspiration. To recall Joseph Straus, as it essayed to "remake" the past (e.g., the classicism of Bach) by killing its fathers, it established the endurance of the fathers as well. Extrapolating from that, modernism, like postmodernism today, doesn't offer so much a full break with earlier aesthetics (e.g., realism for modernism; modernism for postmodernism) as it does a reworking of them. For an excellent introduction to some of these issues in relation to Hindemith, I refer the reader to the introduction and chapters 1 and 2 in David Neumeyer, *The Music of Paul Hindemith* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986). After the war, the remaking of the (musical) past Straus describes in 1920s Neoclassicism was pushed even further, with the 1920s as one of the pasts then being drawn from and challenged. See Straus, *Remaking the Past: Musical Modernism and the Influence of the Tonal Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

26. Neumeyer, *The Music of Paul Hindemith*, 14.

27. The term is said to have been coined by G. F. Hartlaub, director of the Mannheim Art Gallery, whose June 1925 exhibition first put paintings of the "new objectivity" on display. In preparation for the show, Hartlaub wrote that art of the last ten years was "neither impressionistically vague nor expressionistically abstract, neither sensuously superficial nor constructivistically introverted. I want to show those artists who have remained—or who have once more become—avowedly faithful to positive, tangible reality." Quoted by Stephen Hinton in "Weill: *Neue Sachlichkeit*, Surrealism, and *Gebrauchsmusik*," in *A New Orpheus: Essays on Kurt Weill*, ed. Kim Kowalke (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986), 61.

It should be stressed that Eisler defined *Neue Sachlichkeit* music quite differently, considering the movement a reflection of economic changes that intensified the depersonalization process (*Entindividualisierungsprozess der Wirtschaft*). See Hinton, "Weill," 63.

28. Not all participants in 1920s modernist or avant-garde scenes championed modernity or socially oriented notions of authorship, audience, and creativity (Schenker offers one such example). Adorno, for his part, found *Gebrauchsmusik*—and Hindemith in particular—"unimaginative," "nonalienated," and "bourgeois." See Neumeyer, introduction to *The Music of Paul Hindemith*, esp. 10–11.

29. Ibid.

30. Eisler, *A Rebel in Music*, 30.

31. Quoted in A. Kaes, M. Jay, and E. Dimendberg, eds., *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 572.

32. Eisler, *A Rebel in Music*, 109.

33. The Nazis were nonetheless able to profit from Weill's name by exporting his work during the war.

34. Quoted in Kim Kowalke, "Looking Back: Toward a New Orpheus," in Kowalke, *A New Orpheus*, 5.

35. Kurt Weill, "Opera—Where To?" in *Kurt Weill in Europe*, ed. Kim Kowalke (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1979), 507.

36. Hanns Eisler, *Composing for the Films* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1947), 123. The authorship of this study has a complex history that is not fully resolved. Normally it is attributed to Adorno and Eisler. Adorno, however, had his name officially removed, purportedly worried about being affiliated with the Marxist composer in the early years of the Cold War. For the purposes of this study, I will refer to the text as Eisler's since his name alone graces the edition of the book I used.

37. Michael Glenny and Richard Taylor, eds., *S. M. Eisenstein: Selected Works*, vol. 2 (London: British Film Institute, 1996), 246 and 244.

38. See Annette Michelson, "The Wings of Hypothesis," in Teitelbaum, *Montage and Modern Life*. Michelson maintains that Eisenstein severely restricted himself by keeping his musical references and assumptions within a tonal framework .

39. Sergei Eisenstein, "The Filmic Fourth Dimension," in *S. M. Eisenstein: Selected Works*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. Richard Taylor (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 186.

40. Sergei Eisenstein, "The Filmic Fourth Dimension," in *Film Form* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1995), 64, 66.

41. See, for instance, the work of Noël Burch and David Bordwell in the late 1980s and 1990s.

42. Arnold Schoenberg, "New Music" (1923), in *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, ed. Leonard Stein (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 138.

43. Eisler, *Composing for the Films*, 36.

44. Eisler, *A Rebel in Music*, 197.

45. In Bruce Murray, *Film and the German Left in the Weimar Republic: From* Caligari *to* Kuhle Wampe (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 223.

46. Tauber's voice appeared in the first German sound film, *Ich küsse Ihre Hand, Madame* / *I Kiss Your Hand* (1929), in which he sang the title song, dubbing for Harry Liedtke as his character sang to Marlene Dietrich's.

47. "Liebe kleine Nachtigall" was not recorded until 1935, showing the illogical time frames that govern Fassbinder's melodramas.

48. Despite its reputation, "Die Wacht" was never officially endorsed by the National Socialists—nor was it ever challenged.

49. The melody was composed in 1854.

50. Eisler, *Composing for the Films*, 16–17.

51. Ibid., 26.

52. Quoted in Thomas Karban, "En Allemagne," *CinémAction* 62 (January 1992), 192.

53. Interview with the author, Munich, 8 July 1998.

54. For a fuller discussion of scoring Fassbinder's early films, see Raben, "Musique et film."

55. Schneider, *Handbuch Filmmusik*, 186.

56. Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 57.

57. Raben reminded me that Döblin's original novel described the women making "heavenly" ethereal sounds whereas men were constantly grunting and growling like animals [*brummen*].

58. Thomsen, *Fassbinder*, 244.

59. Schneider, *Handbuch Filmmusik*, 188.

60. Eisler, *Composing for the Films*, 101 (my emphasis).

61. Hillman, "Narrative, Sound, and Film," 188–95.

62. Eisler, *Composing for the Films*, 103.

63. McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 127–30.

64. Quoted in *A Rebel in Music*, 173.

65. Eisler, *A Rebel in Music*, 112.

66. Eisler, *Composing for the Films*, 128.

67. Raben, "Musique et film," translation modified from his question "Où sont les règles, les modèles?" 124.

68. The following remark taken from a 1971 interview with Fassbinder suggests that the director rejected Brecht in part to react against Brecht's tremendous cachet with leftist cultural producers in Germany at the time. "I might compare someone like Alexander Kluge to Brecht and myself to Horvath [*sic*; see n. 9]. Kluge's abstraction, like Brecht's, is intellectual, whereas mine is stylistic. Horvath and Brecht don't differ all that much in their political views, but rather in how they express them." Quoted in Christian Braad Thomsen, "Conversations with Rainer Werner Fassbinder," in *Rainer Werner Fassbinder*, ed. Laurence Kardish (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1997), 88.

69. Raben, "Musique et film," 126.

70. Eisler, *Composing for the Films*, 22.

71. Ibid., 23.

72. Eisler rejected much of the "new music" of his contemporaries, maintaining that Hindemith and Stravinsky, for instance, were out to consolidate bourgeois art, albeit in new form. Eisler wanted music to be devoid of style so that it would be hard to tie it to a particular artistic personality. He was equally critical of music that entertained its listeners. In this way, Eisler's alignment with the *Gebrauchsmusik* tradition is fraught with contradiction. Indeed, over the course of his life (he died in 1962), he consistently advocated "songs of struggle, satirical songs, didactic plays, choral montage and choral pieces with a theoretical content." Eisler, *A Rebel in Music*, 59.

In a caveat to *Gebrauchsmusik*'s general interest in the popular transmission of music, he wrote in 1932–33: "We must learn to recognize an increasing process of rationalization in music development, both in the production of music and in its reproduction. The radio, records, sound film and juke box can

make the best music available to enormous numbers of people, or as the case with gramophone records they can be retailed in canned form as commodities." *A Rebel in Music*, 64.

73. Ibid., 36.

74. Once again, I do not wish to minimize the contrast in positions vis-à-vis questions of technology, aesthetic expertise, popular culture, etc. Alfred Döblin, for instance, writes that "Industry, technology, and commerce are strong, but they are not qualified to build the state or, indeed, to maintain and advance humanity." "The Writer and the State," in Kaes, Jay, and Dimendberg, eds., *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, 289.

75. Eisler, *A Rebel in Music*, 106. It is instructive to compare Eisler's remarks to Benjamin, who believed that decay produced a productive distance from the object, a space in which it may be critically reevaluated and approached.

76. Ibid., 136–37.

77. Eisler, *Composing for the Films*, 36.

78. Eisler, *A Rebel in Music*, 75.

79. Allen Weiss, *Shattered Forms: Art Brut, Phantasms, Modernisms* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 47. Weiss takes his remarks from Gilles Deleuze.

80. Ibid., 107.

81. Both forms of shock treatment were developed in Italy prior to World War II.

82. Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," in *Illuminations*, 176.

83. Andreas Huyssen, "Technology and Sexuality in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*," *New German Critique* 24/25 (fall/winter 1981/82), 221–37, and modified in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); and Peter Wollen, "Cinema / Americanism / the Robot," in *Modernity and Mass Culture*, ed. James Naremore and Patrick Brantlinger (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 42–69.

84. Quoted in Anton Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 122.

85. Peter Jansen and Wolfram Schütte, eds., *Herzog/Kluge/Straub* (Munich: Hanser, 1976), 209.

86. Quoted in Hinton, "Weill," 66.

87. Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), 223.

88. Fredric Jameson, ed., *Aesthetics and Politics* (London: New Left Books, 1977), 208.

89. Ibid., 211.

90. Patrice Petro, "After/Shock," *Discourse* 16, no. 2 (1993–94): 77–92, and elaborated in *Aftershocks of the New: Feminism and Film History* (Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2002). I am indebted to Linda van der Water for her observations in a graduate seminar on "Cinema, Modernity and Postmodernity" I taught at the University of Toronto, 1997–98.

91. Eisler, *A Rebel in Music*, 157. This remark appears in virtually the same form in *Composing for the Films*: "The greater the drabness of . . . existence, the sweeter the melody," 22.

92. Eisler, *A Rebel in Music*, 215.

93. Thomas Elsaesser, "Primary Identification and the Historical Subject: Fassbinder and Germany," *Cinétracts* 3 (fall 1980), 46.

94. Elsaesser, *Fassbinder's Germany*, 250.

95. Recall Adorno's view of Mahler: "[H]is fractures are the script of truth. In them the social movement appears negatively, as in its victims." Fassbinder's notion of victims is arguably even more complex.

96. Adorno writes, "This is not a time for political art, but politics has migrated into autonomous art, and nowhere more so than where it seems to be politically dead." Adorno, "Commitment," in Jameson, ed., *Aesthetics and Politics*, 194.

97. Elsaesser, for instance, has become reluctant to associate the director with "leftism," opting for adjectives such as "liberal" or (at times in the same sentence) "anarchic." To be sure, Fassbinder disassociated himself from organized political movements and social groups, even those to which he might be readily linked, e.g., gay men. Still, it is striking how readily Elsaesser adopts the same refusal of political categories. Certainly the move signals new directions in Elsaesser's work. In order to emphasize how important *emotional* experiences of subjectivity are, it may seem as if one needs to render the political component of Fassbinder's work ambiguous, free-floating, and toothless, as Elsaesser does. Still, for such a politically astute critic, Elsaesser's eschewal of the left is striking, all the more for being written in an extremely conservative political and corporate global climate. See nn. 98 and 99 below.

98. See Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories* (New York: Routledge, 1995). For an incisive critique of the left's disavowal of the left, see Geoff Waite, *Nietzsche's Corps/e* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997).

99. Elsaesser, *Fassbinder's Germany*, 120. See also n. 97.

100. See Elsaesser, *Fassbinder's Germany*, particularly the chapter "The BRD Trilogy, or: History, the Love Story?" The Meinhof remark appears on page 315 in an appendix giving historical and political timelines alongside the filmmaking activities of Fassbinder and other directors. "Suicide" was the state's official explanation of Meinhof's suspicious death.

101. Chion, *Audio-Vision*, 8–9.

102. Recall Norbert Jürgen Schneider's remarks that silence contains the "emotional highlights" of Fassbinder's films. Sanders-Brahms's *Germany, Pale Mother* uses an eerie silence as the soon-to-be unhappily married couple, Lene and Hans, begin dancing during their courtship.

103. Eisler, *Composing for the Films*, 25 (my emphasis).

104. Interview with the author, Munich, 8 July 1998.

105. Ibid.

106. Jacques Lacan, "Kant with Sade," *October* 51 (1989), 63; and Julia Kristeva, *The Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (New York: Columbia Uni-

versity Press, 1989). See especially chapter 4, "Beauty: The Depressive's Other Realm."

107. Georgina Brown, "A Very Sad Song Sung with Lots of Feeling," in Kardish, 29.

108. Interview with the author, Munich, 8 July 1998. Raben also identified Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto, second movement, as another example of critique and beauty working simultaneously. Beethoven wanted the work to protest Napoleon's marching into Vienna. In that regard, Raben found the "entirely gentle and beautiful" sound of the piece to be crucial to its effect.

"Sailor's Song" from *Happy End*, music by Kurt Weill, lyrics by Bertolt Brecht. Copyright 1958 European American Music Corporation. Copyright renewed. All rights reserved. Used by permission of European American Music Corporation, agent for the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, Inc., and agent for Stefan Brecht.

109. James E. Young, "Germany's Memorial Question: Memory, Counter-Memory, and the End of the Monument," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 96, no. 4 (fall 1997), 856.

110. Dominick LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994), 188.

CHAPTER 3: KLUGE'S ASSAULT ON HISTORY

1. For an excellent discussion of gender difference and the theoretical construction of mourning, see Linville, *Feminism, Film, Fascism*.

2. Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Boston: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1989), 250.

3. See Miriam Hansen, "Alexander Kluge, Cinema and the Public Sphere: The Construction Site of Counter-History," *Discourse* 6 (fall 1983), 53–74. Critic and novelist Gary Indiana refers to the director as a "demolition artist." See "Alexander Kluge: The Demolition Artist," *Village Voice* 33, no. 43 (25 October 1988), 67.

4. In addition to metaphors of excavation and "strategies of below," there is *The Patriot*'s motif of ice. Gabi digs in frozen ground; the nation keeps a cold grip on the past it contains, making access difficult, impossible, just as officials are cold and impenetrable. The film also includes a discussion of absolute zero, the point at which matter is "perfectly ordered" but human activity cannot exist. And the film ends on a snowy New Year's Day. For a discussion of *The Patriot*'s motif of ice and snow, see Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat*, esp. 130–31.

5. Hansen, "Alexander Kluge, Cinema and the Public Sphere," 70; 66; 70.

6. Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, esp. 164.

7. Walter Benjamin, "Thesis on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, 257.

8. Primo Levi, *Si c'est un homme*, trans. Martine Schruoffeneger (Paris: Julliard), 35.

9. For Kluge, *Zusammenhang* is a sufficiently important term that he asks foreign interviewers to retain the original German. Since the knee, as one form of connection, has its views voiced by Kluge, critics have understandably linked its goals with the director's, with his style of filmmaking, or with his obsession with ruins (as things that are not fully dead) and with burial (along with interment, disinterment, layering, repression, and excavation). For his part, Kluge contrasts his "dramaturgy of *Zusammenhang*" to the "dramaturgy of inescapable tragedy" (the provenance of nineteenth-century opera, as we will see in the discussion of *The Power of Emotion*).

10. Hans Kellner, "Language and Historical Representation," in *The Postmodern History Reader*, ed. K. Jenkins (London: Routledge, 1997), 127.

11. The point is complicated by Rotwang's high-tech laboratory, where he produces the "worker of the future," Maria's original function.

12. Hitler was responsible for constructing much of Germany's elaborate Autobahn system; by 1928, the Organization Todt, an auxiliary Nazi force that used conscripted labor such as civil engineers for building roads, bridges, and defense outlets, had laid two thousand miles of it. Albert Speer, the minister of architecture, was its head.

13. James Acuff, *Toward a Realistic Method: Commentaries on the Notion of Antagonistic Realism, a Translation of Kluge's* Zur realischen Methode (master's thesis, University of Texas, 1980), 4.

14. Helke Sander, " 'You Can't Always Get What You Want': The Films of Alexander Kluge," *New German Critique* 49 (1990), 60. Other feminist critiques of Kluge include B. Ruby Rich, "She Says, He Says: The Power of the Narrator in Modernist Film Politics," in *Chick Flicks* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998), 238–52; Gertrud Koch, "Alexander Kluge's Phantom of the Opera," 79–88; Jutta Brückner, "Carmen and die Macht der Gefühle," *Asthetik und Kommunikation* 4, nos. 53/4 (December 1983), 226–32; Heidi Schlüpmann, "Femininity as Productive Force: Kluge and Critical Theory," *New German Critique* 49 (1990), 69–78. Miriam Hansen's work (see references throughout) has consistently raised questions about gender in Kluge's output as well.

15. Schlüpmann, "Femininity as Productive Force," 75.

16. Sander, " 'You Can't Always Get What You Want,' " 64–65.

17. Rich, "She Says, He Says," 244.

18. Ibid., 239.

19. Ibid., 251.

20. Its actual title translates as "The Assault of the Present on the Rest of Time."

21. Sander, " 'You Can't Always Get What You Want,' " 68.

22. Ibid., 62.

23. Christopher Pavsek, " 'History and Obstinacy' ": Negt and Kluge's Redemption of Labor," *New German Critique* 68 (spring/summer, 1996), 137–63.

24. See Alexander Kluge, interviewed by Stuart Liebman, *October* 46 (fall 1988), 23–59.

25. From Pavsek, " 'History and Obstinacy,' " 139.

26. Quoted in Schlüpmann, "Femininity as Productive Force," 76.

27. See also the late scholar of the New German Cinema, Jan Dawson, "Alexander Kluge: Interview," *Film Comment* 10, no. 6 (1974), 51–57.

28. Quoted in Leslie Adelson, *Making Bodies, Making History: Feminism and German Identity* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 4.

29. Schlüpmann, "Femininity as Productive Force," 74. In contrast to my argument, Schlüpmann claims that in "eliding the erotic altogether," Kluge does *not* romanticize femininity (also 74).

30. Peter Lutze makes a similar observation in his study of Kluge.

31. Acuff, *Toward a Realistic Method*, 12.

32. Nancy K. Miller, "The Text's Heroine: A Feminist Critic and Her Fictions," *Diacritics* 12, no. 2 (1982), 53. Bell hooks makes the same point in "Postmodern Blackness": "Yeah, it's easy to give up identity, when you got one." *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1990), 28.

33. Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat*, 133.

34. Slavoj Žižek, quoting Lacan in *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1991), 23.

35. For Christopher Pavsek, *Zusammenhang* is "relationality"; for Fredric Jameson, "context." All of these expressions work, and it is appropriate that the term cannot be fully served by a single translation.

36. Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 7.

37. Phelan, *Mourning Sex*, 5.

38. See, for instance, Shoshana Felman, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, ed. S. Felman and D. Laub (New York: Routledge, 1992), esp. the foreword. Caruth's own description recalls Kluge's interest in history's powerful phantom traces, which the director cast in terms of residual, "feminine" labor force and counterspheres (*Unclaimed Experience*, 17).

39. Sandor Ferenczi, "Symposium: Held at the Fifth International Psycho-Analytic Congress," in Abraham, Ferenczi et al., eds., *Psycho-analysis and the War Neuroses*, vol. 2 (London: The International Psycho-Analytical Press, 1921), 10.

40. Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 2.

41. Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, 213.

42. See Adelson, *Making Bodies, Making History*.

43. Many critics have read the facial division to allegorize the division of Germany into eastern and western states after the war.

44. Ferenczi, "Symposium," 14.

45. Ibid., 15.

46. *DSM-III-R*, 250. Quoted in Laura S. Brown, "Not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma," in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 100, my emphasis.

47. Ernst Simmel, (Untitled), in *Psycho-analysis and the War Neuroses,* ed. Abraham et al., 31, my emphases.

48. *The Patriot* and *The Power of Emotion* feature the same time-lapse photography of the Frankfurt skyline, Gabi Teichert appears in both, and both films recount fragmented love stories interrupted by war.

49. Shoshana Felman, "Education and Crisis, or the Vicissitudes of Teaching," in Caruth, *Trauma,* 53.

50. Dori Laub, "Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle," in Caruth, *Trauma,* 66.

51. Derrida's gloss in Abraham and Torok, *The Wolf Man's Magic Word,* xvi.

52. Ibid., xvii.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

55. I borrow Peggy Phelan's notion of "internalized hysteria" from *Mourning Sex.*

56. See Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat,* for a discussion of the historical circumstances surrounding the production of *The Patriot* and the references to Kluge's childhood experience. As Kaes notes, the recurring images of fiery "attacks from above" in Kluge's work are understandable (109). Traumatic representation is as repetitive as it is personal, and the director's decision to cast his sister as the woman trying to uncover the truth about the woman whose house was set ablaze during an Allied attack seems highly motivated.

57. Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity, and the Aesthetic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992).

58. Acuff, *Toward a Realistic Method,* 57.

59. Sander, " 'You Can't Always Get What You Want,' " 64. Sander's argument, very much a product of feminist thought of the time, does not challenge Kluge's binarist treatment of resistance, gender, and character, a criticism that would come back to haunt her in the reception of her much later film, *Liberators Take Liberties.*

60. Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat,* 131.

61. For a critique of Kluge's use of Beethoven in this privileged moment of the film, see Roger Hillman, "Beethoven, Mahler, and the New German Cinema," *Musicology Australia* 20 (1997), 96–105; for a history of the European Union's choice of Beethoven's Chorale, see Caryl Clark, "Forging Identity: Beethoven's 'Ode' as European Anthem," *Critical Inquiry* 23 (summer 1997), 789–807.

CHAPTER 4: UNDOING ACT 5

1. Alexander Kluge, *Der Macht der Gefühle* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1984), 170–78.

2. Koch, "Alexander Kluge's Phantom of the Opera," 84–85.

3. Op. 118, no. 3, 1892–93, one of the composer's last works.

4. Edgar Boehlke, a German television actor, portrays the singer.

5. Kluge, "On Opera, Form, and Feelings," *New German Critique* 49 (winter 1990), 108.

6. Miriam Hansen, "Introduction," 9.

7. See Slavoj Žižek, " 'The Wound Is Healed Only by the Spear That Smote You': The Operatic Subject and Its Vicissitudes," in *Opera Through Other Eyes,* ed. David J. Levin (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994), 177–214.

8. The German "miracle" benefits from the term's loose connotations of divine benediction, whereas "recovery" suggests a restorative process, perhaps one that recaptures the fantasy of prelapsarian wholeness—with the help of banks, public policy, and culture.

9. Kluge's footage is taken from the state funeral for former Hessian minister Heinz Herbert Karry.

10. Hoger also appears as the matchmaker, as well as the woman on trial for shooting her husband.

11. Alexander Kluge, "On Film and the Public Sphere," 218, n. 5.

12. See his interview with Rainer Lewandowski, *Die Filme von Alexander Kluge* (Hildesheim: Olms Presse, 1980), esp. 30–31.

13. Ibid., 30.

14. Lutze, *Alexander Kluge,* 86.

15. Kluge, "On Opera, Form, and Feelings," 105.

16. Quoted in Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing,* 283.

17. Ralph P. Locke, "Cutthroats and Casbah Dancers, Muezzins and Timeless Sands: Musical Images of the Middle East," in *The Exotic in Western Music,* ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 119.

18. Liebman, "Interview with Alexander Kluge," 17.

19. Teresa Ebert, *Ludic Feminism and After* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995).

20. Materialism is primarily concerned with economic facets of production and consumption, materiality with the concrete formal details of textuality. While separate phenomena, they are not unrelated, and a number of scholars have explored the conditions under which material forms might point to the material conditions of, say, filmmaking. Richard Dyer pursued this line of thought in "Entertainment and Utopia," where he maintained that cinema's "nonrepresentational signs"—e.g., textures, colors, and music—can convey the "impression of utopia," which offers a form of "elsewhereness" formed in response to historically specific material conditions and perceived social injustices or deficiencies. The sparkle, glitter, and coins that adorn the chorines in the 1933 musical number, "We're in the Money," and the piece's sense of abundance is, he argues, a response to the scarcity and poverty of the Depression era. In drawing attention to the formal mechanisms by which film is made, style is a *material* device that can engender *materialist* and historically sensitive readings. In *Genre: The Musical,* ed. Rick Altman (London: Routledge, 1981), 175–89.

21. The couple that provides this labor takes on some of *Parsifal*'s role of redeemer, bringing an ailing older man—Allewisch/Amfortas—back to life. Still, it remains curious (especially given Kluge's cynicism about heterosexual romance) that the savior figure is a heterosexual couple. Moreover, this couple

is situated in a Western capitalist framework, even if it is connected to it via an "alternative-within," the black market economy.

22. See Žižek, "The Wound Is Healed," for a fuller elaboration of this point. Some of my observations are indebted to his analysis of *Parsifal* and other operas.

23. Kluge, by contrast, shows us its bankruptcy via the empty chalice exposed in the opera house fire.

24. For a discussion of anti-Semitism in *Parsifal* when the opera was initially performed, see Paul Lindau, "*Parsifal* von Richard Wagner," *Kölnische Zeitung*, nos. 208, 210, 212 (29 and 31 July and 2 August 1882), reprinted in vol. 2 of S. Grossmann-Vendrey, ed., *Bayreuth in der deutschen Presse: Dokumentenband* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, 1977), 30–40. Referenced in Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Wagner Androgyne: A Study in Interpretation* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 346. For more recent discussions, see Jeremy Tambling, *Opera, Ideology, and Film* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987); and Linda and Michael Hutcheon, *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death* (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 1996); in addition to Nattiez.

25. Syberberg, *Parsifal: Ein Filmessay* (Munich: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1982), 11, 56, and 161. Quoted in Nattiez, *Wagner Androgyne*, 168.

26. Frederich Nietzsche, "The Case of Wagner," in *The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967), 160.

27. Catherine Clément, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 5.

28. Kluge, *Der Macht der Gefühle*, 176.

29. Clément, *Opera*, 6.

30. Ralph P. Locke, "What Are These Women Doing in Opera?" in *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*, ed. Corinne Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 63.

31. Hutcheon and Hutcheon, *Opera*, 12. The Hutcheons state,

> Opera has always been an art form obsessed with death: Monteverdi's *La favola d'Orfeo* (1607) establishes a story pattern of love and loss that influences the staged representations of operatic death from the very start. In most nineteenth- and twentieth-century operas of the tragic variety . . . the deaths are most frequently violent [the authors list *Rigoletto, Pagliacci, Wozzeck, Tosca, Lucia di Lammermoor, Eugene Onegein, Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and others]. Catherine Clément has suggested in *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, that the victims are most frequently female. Frequently they are, but by no means always, as the lists above suggest. . . . In short, . . . the gender question in opera is more complex than some people have suggested: it may be that for every Senta who leaps to her death . . . there is a Peter Grimes who rows out to sea to die. (11–12)

32. Samuel Abel, *Opera in the Flesh: Sexuality in Operatic Performance* (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1996), 10.

33. Some excellent discussions include Susan J. Leonardi and Rebecca Pope, *The Diva's Mouth: Body, Voice, Prima Donna Politics* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1996); and Terry Castle, "In Praise of Brigitte Fassbaender: Reflections on Diva-Worship," in Blackmer and Smith, *En Travesti*, 20–58.

34. Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, 285.

35. Sander, " 'You Can't Always Get What You Want,' " 62.

36. Kluge created a variety of what he called, after Adorno's proposal in 1964, "imaginary operas" and "imaginary opera guides."

37. Leonardi and Pope, *The Diva's Mouth*, 16.

CHAPTER 5: RESTAGING HISTORY WITH FANTASY

1. This is not to uphold familiar claims that camp is inherently progressive, just as *Zusammenhang* does not necessarily move filmgoers in specific political directions. Indeed, for many lesbian and feminist critics, camp reconciles male privilege and / or misogyny, a point to which I will return.

2. Susan Sontag, "Notes on 'Camp,' " in *Against Interpretation* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966), 278. Reprinted in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject: A Reade*r, ed. Fabio Cleto (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 55.

3. Andrew Ross, *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 140.

4. Ibid., 140 and 139.

5. Pamela Robertson, *Guilty Pleasures: Feminist Camp from Mae West to Madonna* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996), 4.

6. Other aspects of Meyer's argument court a certain essentialism. "[T]here are not different kinds of Camp. There is only one. And it is queer." Nonqueer camp practices becomes the "camp trace." Moe Meyer, "Introduction: Reclaiming the Discourse of Camp," in *The Politics and Poetics of Camp*, ed. Moe Meyer (London: Routledge, 1994), 5.

7. Patricia White, "Madame X of the China Seas: A Study of Ulrike Ottinger's Film," *Screen* 28, no. 4 (1987): 80–95.

8. Gerhard Hoffman, "Cette vieille mentalité des pirates: Entretien avec Ulrike Ottinger," *Cinéma* 259 (1979), 22.

9. The Mitscherlichs' model was geared primarily towards those who had psychically invested in Hitler, and not his victims.

10. As of this writing, the German government has not compensated gay survivors of forced work and concentration camps.

11. This is not meant to queer Straub and Huillet so much as to challenge the practice of situating films in categories created in relation to a purportedly stable, normative center. By rejecting authorship and aestheticism, Huillet and Straub incurred the disapproval of Alexander Kluge. See Byg, *Landscapes of Resistance*, especially the chapter "Straub/Huillet, the New Left, and Germany."

12. Alice Kuzniar, *The Queer German Cinema* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 6.

13. Jose Muñoz has explored the concept in reference to performance art and queers of color. See his *Disidentifications*.

14. Theodor Adorno, "Music, Language, and Composition," *Musical Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (1993): 402.

15. For Kuzniar, "[A]llegory exaggerates as if to make up for its own inarticulateness" (*The Queer German Cinema*, 180).

16. Ibid., 187.

17. The summary is by Michelle Lekas. See her outstanding "A Brief Epistemology of Seriality," Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 2000, 29 and 30.

18. Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, 280.

19. *The Tenderness of Wolves* is layered with heterogeneous historical references. "The Werewolf of Hanover" (Fritz Haarmann) murdered his victims in the 1920s, yet *Wolves* is set after the war and acknowledges the postwar Nazi Werewolf movement. Raab does an extraordinary visual impersonation of Kinski's recent *Nosferatu* in Herzog's version, which was itself a vampirization of Dreyer's. It is impossible to view the film without also being reminded of Fritz Lang's *M*, which uses aspects of Haarmann in combination with the "Monster / Vampire of Düsseldorf," serial killer Peter Kürten, fictionalized in *M* as Hans Beckert. Both films transformed the killers (of children and adults in actuality) into child molester/murderers, with explicit homoerotic edges in *Wolves*. Lang liked to claim that his original title for *M* was *Mörder unter uns* / *Murderers Are Among Us* and that the Nazis refused to permit it, an account that should probably be chalked up to the director's tendency to revise history.

20. See Laurence Rickels, "Real Time Travel (Interview with Ulrike Ottinger)," *Artforum* 31 (February 1993), 83–88, esp. 84.

21. Kuzniar, *The Queer German Cinema*, 169.

22. Chris Straayer discusses the way the film itself is split into two distinct segments. For a fuller discussion, see "Lesbian Narratives and Queer Characters in Monika Treut's 'Virgin Machine,' " *Journal of Film and Video* 45, nos. 2/3 (summer/fall 1993): 24–39.

23. Claire Monk, "*Virgin Machine*" (review), *Sight and Sound* 3, no. 7 (July 1993): 44–45.

24. Marcia Klotz, "The Queer and Unqueer Spaces of Monika Treut's Films," in *Triangulated Visions: Women in Recent German Cinema*, ed. I. Majer O'Sickey and I. von Zadow (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 65–77.

25. Klotz misidentifies the voice as that of the prostitute.

26. Klotz, "The Queer and Unqueer Spaces of Monika Treut's Films," 72–73.

27. Compare Jude's character in the roughly contemporary Irish-American film, *The Crying Game* (Jordan, 1994).

28. See Temby Caprio, "Ulrike Ottinger's *Ticket of No Return:* Drinking, the Masquerade, and Subverting Gender Norms," *Arachné* 3, no. 2 (1996): 97–115, for an informative account of the different contexts of Ottinger's film, moving from its initial hostile reception by the German women's community to contemporary feminism's embrace of it. Since the late 1980s, Ottinger's early films have attained something of a cult status, enthusiastically discussed by lesbian theorists in and out of Germany. See also Cillie Rentmeister, "Frauen, Körper, Kunst: Mikrophysik der patriarchalischen Macht," *Aesthetik und Kommunication* 37 (1979), 61–68.

29. Hoffman, "Cette vieille mentalité des pirates," 22.

30. *Noa Noa* is the title of Gauguin's memoirs.

31. White, "Madame X of the China Seas," 83.

32. Diana Fuss, *Identification Papers* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 70. Freud, as Fuss goes on to say, soon changed his depiction by shifting homosexual "excess" from exterior signs to internal unconscious "deviations."

33. Roswitha Mueller, "Interview with Ulrike Ottinger," *Discourse* 4 (winter 1982), 113.

34. Sabine Hake, " 'And with Favorable Winds They Sailed Away': *Madame X* and Femininity," in *Gender and German Cinema: Feminist Interventions*, vol. 1: *Gender and Representation in New German Cinema*, ed. S. Frieden et al. (Providence, R.I.: Berg, 1993), 179.

35. Teresa de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Cinema, Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 134.

36. As Patricia White argues, " 'Madame X' can be seen as a synecdoche for the critical proposition of woman's absence from history, while insisting on her (almost uncanny) return" ("Madame X of the China Seas," 84). It is interesting to note that most of the cinematic versions of this story were produced by MGM, whose lion appears to roar throughout *Madame X*'s soundtrack. Of the 1916, 1920, 1929, 1937, and 1966 versions, all but the first and last were made with MGM. At least one telefilm version has appeared in North America.

37. See Hake's article (" 'And with Favorable Winds They Sailed Away' ") for a discussion of Ottinger's nod to Hollywood's *Madame X*s.

38. A good example here is the demise of Dr. Merick at the beginning of Sirk's *The Magnificent Obsession*. His death is so sanctified as to be offscreen altogether.

39. Mueller, "Interview with Ulrike Ottinger," 124.

40. Hoffman, "Cette vieille mentalité des pirates," 18.

41. Ibid., 16.

42. White, "Madame X of the China Seas," 84. The arm also references Lang's *Metropolis*. Rotwang the inventor ocnophiliacly clings to the woman he lost through his artificial hand, the robotic qualities of which link him to another "woman," the robot Maria. This exemplifies the double coding of female as character and automaton that we see in *Madame X*.

43. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 474.

44. J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analyses*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Norton, 1973), 318.

45. Leo Bersani and Ulysse Dutoit, *The Forms of Violence: Narrative in Assyrian Art and Modern Culture* (New York: Schocken, 1985), 66.

46. Elizabeth Cowie, "Fantasia," in *The Woman in Question*, ed. P. Adams and E. Cowie (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1990), 149–96; and Teresa de Lauretis, *The Practice of Love: Lesbian Sexuality and Perverse Desire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

47. Hoffman, "Cette vieille mentalité des pirates," 18.

48. Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (St. Louis, Mo.: Telos Press, 1981), 94.

49. Bersani and Dutoit, *The Forms of Violence*, 71.

50. De Lauretis, *The Practice of Love*, esp. "Toward a Theory of Lesbian Sexuality."

51. Elsaesser, *Fassbinder's Germany*, 137.

52. See Elisabeth Cowie, "Fantasia."

53. Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat*, xi.

54. For Slavoj Žižek, the "Holocaust comedy" might be the most appropriate subgenre for filmmakers since it "accepts in advance its failure to render the horror of the Holocaust." "Camp Comedy," *Sight and Sound* 10, no. 4 (April 2000): 26–29.

> The privileged space in which we experience [comedy's] indestructible life is *perversion*—reduced to its bare bones, perversion is a defence against the threat of mortality. . . . [I]n the perverse universe a human being can survive any catastrophe, adult sexuality is reduced to a childish game, one is not forced to die or to choose one of the two sexes. Recall a standard Tom and Jerry cartoon. . . . The stuff of comedy is precisely this repetitive, resourceful popping-up of life—no matter how dark the predicament, we can be sure the small fellow will find a way out. (29)

55. Mark Booth, *Camp* (London: Quartet Books, 1983), 143–44.

56. See Corey Creekmur, "Introduction, Dossier on Popular Music," in *Out in Culture*, ed. C. K. Creekmur and A. Doty (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), 404.

57. David Roman, "It's My Party and I'll Die If I Want To!: Gay Men, AIDS, and the Circulation of Camp in U.S. Theater," in *Campgrounds: Style and Homosexuality*, ed. David Berman (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 216.

58. Mark Thompson, "Children of Paradise: A Brief History of Queens," in *Out in Culture*, ed. Creekmur and Doty, 449.

59. Robertson, *Guilty Pleasures*, 5.

60. Bersani, "Is the Rectum a Grave?" 208.

61. Consider, for example, k. d. lang's music video "Miss Chatelaine," in which the recently outed singer appeared as a 1950s-style debutante, replete with puffy dress and stacked hair, lounging on a set filled with Lawrence Welk bubbles. While full of mimicry, the effect is less assassination than playfulness, perhaps a form of disidentification. Werner Schroeter's films (more kitsch than camp, actually) engage this gentler play, pleasure, and critique. As I argue in the next chapter, Schroeter's aesthetic completely lacks the aggression Bersani ascribes to camp.

62. Hake, "And with Favorable Winds They Sailed Away," 184.

63. Many of these remarks are indebted to Muñoz's study. See especially his preface.

64. Robertson, *Guilty Pleasures*, 17.

65. Johannes von Moltke, "Camping in the Art Closet: The Politics of Camp and Nation in German Film," *New German Critique* 63 (fall 1994), 77–106.

See also Bruce Williams's excellent " 'Life Is Very Precious, Even Right Now': (Un) Happy Camping in the New German Cinema," *post script* 16, no. 3 (summer 1997): 51–64.

66. Schygulla's *Bilder aus Filmen von Rainer Werner Fassbinder,* quoted in von Moltke, "Camping in the Art Closet," 97. Schygulla's body still remains connected to the German nation. Her current struggles with obesity reflect Germany's perceived "fat cat" status in the European Community. Former chancellor Helmut Kohl elicited that same reading with even more intensity.

67. Von Moltke, "Camping in the Art Closet," 98.

68. Ibid., 102.

69. Ibid., 103.

70. Von Moltke writes, "[W]hile I would not want to generalize to the point of saying that camp itself is inevitably American, there is a strong sense in which camp always involves the signs of America—its consumer culture and its fabrication, its star system, its glamour, as well as its own camp culture" (ibid., 101).

71. Ibid., 101, n. 59.

72. Although U.S. camp icons, both stated and implied, abound in the film, it would be wrong to reduce *Anita*'s camp strategies to Americana. While the North American English version of the film has the simple mention of "Doris Day" precipitating Anita's "fatal" collapse (she is told to calm down and behave more like the chippy actress), in the German, the reference is to 1950s television star Ingrid Meyser, a significant camp reference for being German derived.

73. Mark Nash, " 'Not the Homosexual,' " *Monthly Film Bulletin* 57, no. 680 (September 1990): 250.

74. One of the best overviews of early German films with gay and lesbian themes remains Richard Dyer's "Less and More than Women and Men: Lesbian and Gay Cinema in Weimar Germany," *New German Critique* 51 (fall 1990), 5–61. The essay includes analyses of *Anders als die Anderen / Different from the Others* (Richard Oswald, 1919) and *Mädchen in Uniform.* Revised in Dyer, *Now You See It: Studies on Lesbian and Gay Film* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

75. "From Repressive Tolerance to Erotic Liberation: *Mädchen in Uniform,*" in Rich, *Chick Flicks*, 179–206. Originally published in 1981.

76. Susan McClary, *George Bizet: Carmen,* Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

77. Gioseffo Zarlino, quoted in Martin Scherzinger and Neville Hoad, "A/Symmetrical Reading of *Inversion* in Fin-de-Siècle Music, Musicology, and Sexology," in *Queering the Canon: Defying Sights in German Literature and Culture,* ed. Christoph Lorey and John L. Plews (Columbia, S.C.: Camden House, 1998), 41.

78. Scherzinger and Hoad, "A/Symmetrical Reading of *Inversion,*" 44.

79. Philip Brett, "Musicality, Essentialism, and the Closet," in *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology,* ed. P. Brett, E. Wood, and G. Thomas (New York: Routledge, 1994). See also Gary Thomas's " 'Was George

Frideric Handel Gay?': On Closet Questions and Cultural Politics," in the same anthology. "Though different in degree," he writes,

> Handel's image is constituted as a plenitude, one that as time went on got constructed increasingly in terms not only of Romantic hero ("heaven-sent genius"), but also of British national identity and religious purity. The myth could hold together, indeed be fortified, by such accretions, even in the presence of minor flaws in an otherwise seamless fabric. (170)

80. Brett, "Musicality, Essentialism, and the Closet," 14.

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid., 15.

83. Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus: The Life of the German Composer Adrian Leverkühn as Told by a Friend,* trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Random House, 1948), 127.

84. Jonathan Kalb, "Lotti Da," *Village Voice* 33, no. 2 (19 January 1988), 72.

85. Among others, *Anita*'s reviewer for *The New York Post* refers to Brecht, whose traces he finds in the film's intertitles. "Weekend Movies," *The New York Post*, 15 January 1988, n. p.

86. Laurence Rickels, "It's a Wound-erful Life," *Artforum* 32 (December 1993), 45–47; 97.

87. J. Hoberman, "The Belly of an Audience," *Village Voice* 33, no. 2, (19 January 1988), 65.

88. Rosa von Praunheim, "Monologue intérieur," *Cinéma* 252 (December 1979), 16.

89. In the 1950s, breakthrough scores like Leonard Rosenmann's atonal music for Minnelli's melodrama in a psychiatric ward, *The Cobweb* (1955), emerged more frequently, thanks to combined industrial, economic, aesthetic, and consuming trends that displaced the hegemony of the "classic" studio score.

90. Personal correspondence, October 1999.

91. Mark Nash, "*Anita: Tänze des Lasters,*" *Monthly Film Bulletin* 57, no. 679 (August 1990), 215.

92. "Weekend Movies," *The New York Post*, 15 January 1988, n. p.

93. Dyer, "Less and More than Women and Men," 6.

94. The film's soundtrack is not restricted to period music. For instance, the particular combination and performance style of the piano, percussion, and brass passage that recurs throughout the film would not have been common in the 1920s, but only later. Thanks to James Reel for sharing this observation.

95. The resemblance to the ballet stops there, since the film characters' movements are more fluid and less disciplined than those of the renowned ballet. Instead, the scene freely borrows the tropes of silent film melodrama, down to its piano accompaniment. As we watch the dance in the woods, we hear Brahms's Waltz in B Major, op. 16, no. 1—a purely instrumental waltz, not originally, intended for dance performance.

96. Richard Buckle, *Nijinsky,* rev. ed. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), 187.

97. Quoted in Buckle, *Nijinsky,* 285.

98. Berber performs in front of the men, who are playing Arab wind instruments and drums, after a belly dancer quits the floor. Despite its sensuality, traditional belly dancing is not vulgar; only Westernized variations on it have performers move their hips in explicitly sexual patterns or remove parts of their costume. The Egyptian music played in the scene is similarly inappropriate to historical source, exaggerated according to clichéd expectations of western auditors.

99. Elsaesser, "Myth as the Phantasmagoria of History," 136.

100. For a fuller discussion, see Caryl Flinn, "The Deaths of Camp," in *Camp,* ed. Cleto.

101. Fuss, *Identification Papers,* 60.

102. M. G. Lord draws the analogy to *Maria Braun,* going so far as to say: "[T]he parallel between Maria and the Federal Republic is clearly defined: Maria kills a black American G.I.; her German husband takes the fall, and she remains loyal to him while he is in jail—a situation analogous to the prisonlike condition of East Germany before 1989." M. G. Lord, *Forever Barbie: The Unauthorized Biography of a Real Doll* (New York: Morrow, 1994), 28.

103. Like *Anita,* von Praunheim's 1989 *Schweigen = Tod / Silence = Death* opens with a character directly displaying a pair of buttocks to the camera. *Silence = Death* immediately establishes the buttocks as locus of homosexual pleasure and death, dramatized by the performer's eventual firing of a toy pistol into his rectum in a mock suicide.

104. In addition to Edelman's article discussed below, essays include D. A. Miller, "Anal Rope," *Representations* 32 (fall 1990), 114–33; and Bersani, "Is the Rectum a Grave?"

105. Lee Edelman, "Seeing Things: Representation, the Scene of Surveillance, and the Spectacle of Gay Male Sex," in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories,* ed. Diane Fuss (New York: Routledge, 1991), 100–101.

106. Edelman, "Seeing Things," 102.

107. As Eve Sedgwick has noted, "*[T]here has been no important and sustained Western discourse in which women's anal eroticism means.* Means anything"(emphasis in the original). "A Poem Is Being Written," *Representations* 17 (winter 1987), 129.

108. Fuss, *Identification Papers,* 1.

109. Kathryn Kalinak discusses the role of saxophones in constructing these clichés in "The Fallen Woman and the Virtuous Wife: Musical Stereotypes in *The Informer, Gone with the Wind,* and *Laura,*" *Film Reader* 5 (1982), 76–82. Kalinak develops the topic in her analysis of Preminger's *Laura* in *Settling the Score: Music and the Classical Hollywood Film* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992).

110. Jay Scott, "*Anita: Dances of Vice,*" *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), 27 February 1988, n.p.

111. Von Praunheim, "Monologue intérieur," 16.

112. *Anita* develops this topology of front and back, just as *The Patriot* did with vertical and horizontal metaphors. In a way, it is but an extension of its fascination with the anus. For example, a soldier from the audience approaches

the topless Anita in one performance scene. He grabs her, proclaiming that "tomorrow I must go to the front," presumably to win her favors. Yet instead of patriotic pathos or compliance, she mocks him, "Well then, see you in the mass grave," a remark that links commerce, the heterosexual transaction, and the murderousness of war all in one fell swoop. Read psychoanalytically, the soldier's imminent move to the *front* challenges patriotic, heterosexual male desire, since he is theoretically leaving "behind" an anal economy, and facing near-certain death in doing so. That mortality is associated with the "front," where sexual difference is conventionally verified, rather than with the "view from behind," with strong repercussions for queer identities.

113. See Brett, "Musicality, Essentialism, and the Closet," 23, n. 9. Clearly addressing men, Brett elsewhere claims that "all musicians, we must remember, are faggots in the parlance of the male locker room" (18).

114. Suzanne Cusick, "On a Lesbian Relationship with Music," in Brett et al., *Queering the Pitch*, 70.

115. Theodor Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music* (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), 40.

116. Sontag, "Notes on 'Camp,' " 278.

117. Entertainment media, of course, have had a lot to do with their camping, such as Stanley Kubrick's *Clockwork Orange* (1971), *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), and Monty Python. (The latter do a skit in which an anguished Beethoven is composing at the piano. His cross-dressed wife plunks out the famous first three notes of the Fifth Symphony in between strokes of the vacuum cleaner.) Acoustic camp does not depend merely on parodic new contexts, however. The bombastic humanism of Beethoven's Ninth makes it a prime target from the start. Its final chorale movement (along with pieces like Vivaldi's "Spring") are played so ubiquitously as to have virtually camped themselves. These classic pieces have also had a significant impact on the different modes of transmission and listening contexts important to camp, such as Muzak ("music for elevators") or "easy listening" compilation CDs.

118. Schoenberg believed that his twelve-tone technique preserved and maintained Germanic tradition, claiming that "I've just ensured the dominance of German music for the next century." Thanks to Scott Paulin for this observation.

119. Wayne Koestenbaum, *The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1993), 102–3. Koestenbaum explores numerous connections between "homosexuality" and "music" without reducing them into simple reflections of one another.

120. See, in this regard, Mary Russo, *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess and Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Michael Moon and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Divinity: A Dossier / A Performance Piece / A Little Understood Emotion," in *Tendencies* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993); and Flinn, "The Deaths of Camp."

121. Koestenbaum, *The Queen's Throat*, 103 (emphasis in the original).

122. Jay Scott, "*Anita: Dances of Vice.*"

123. Quoted in Tom Rubnitz, "Rosa the Provocateur," *New York Super* (December 1987), n. p.

124. Quoted in Nash, "Not the homosexual," 250.

125. Quoted in Nash, "Not the homosexual," 251.

126. Thomas Y. Levin, "Introduction," in Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament*, 20.

CHAPTER 6: INTROJECTING KITSCH

1. Timothy Corrigan, "On the Edge of History: The Radiant Spectacle of Werner Schroeter," *Film Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (summer 1984), 8.

2. Rainer Werner Fassbinder, "Homage to Werner Schroeter," in *West German Filmmakers on Film*, ed. Rentschler, 196–99. Originally appeared as "Klimmzug, Handstand, Salto mortale—sicher gestanden. *Neapolitanisch Geschwister* von Werner Schroeter," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 24 February 1979. Rentschler's translation modified.

3. Quoted in Gary Indiana, "Scattered Pictures: The Movies of Werner Schroeter," *Artforum* (March 1982), 51.

4. Quoted in (and trans.) Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, 48.

5. Schroeter's disdain for academic analysis is legendary. He is especially dismissive of psychoanalysis.

6. Indiana, "Scattered Pictures," 47.

7. The subtitle to Corrigan's essay "On the Edge of History" is "The Radiant Spectacle of Werner Schroeter."

8. Thanks to Barbara Kosta and Diane Wiener for their insights on this aspect of kitsch.

9. For discussions of the origins of "kitsch," see Gillo Dorfles, ed., *Kitsch: The World of Bad Taste* (New York: Bell Publishing, 1969).

10. Peter Ward, *Kitsch in Sync: A Consumer's Guide to Bad Taste* (London: Plexus, 1991), 12.

11. Kulka, *Kitsch and Art.*

12. Hermann Broch, "Notes on the Problem of Kitsch," in *Kitsch*, ed. Gillo Dorfles, 62 (my emphasis).

13. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 54.

14. Clement Greenberg, "The Avant-Garde and Kitsch," (1939) reprinted in Dorfles, ed., *Kitsch*, 122. Greenberg argues that this kitsch aesthetic was adopted with zeal by fascist political regimes eager to appeal to the broad masses.

15. From Dave Hickey's story "A Rhinestone as Big as the Ritz," in *The Conscious Reader*, ed. Caroline Shrodes, Harry Finestone, Michael Shugrue (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001).

16. See Lekas, "A Brief Epistemology of Seriality."

17. Ibid., 13.

18. Ibid., 15.

19. Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, 284.

20. My thanks to Dan Cottom for this and other insights into kitsch in reading an earlier draft of this chapter.

21. Arthur Koestler, *Insight and Outlook* (New York: Macmillan, 1949), 396.

22. Matei Calinescu, *Faces of Modernity: Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 240.

23. Friedlander, *Reflections of Nazism*, 39.

24. Quoted by Kluge, "Pact with a Dead Man," in Rentschler, *West German Filmmakers on Film*, 236. Translation by Rentschler; my emphasis.

25. Susan Sontag, "Notes on 'Camp,' " in *Against Interpretation* (New York: Dell, 1966), 291–92. Reprinted in Cleto, ed., *Camp*, 65.

26. Thom Prentice, "The Sound and the Fury," Letters to the Editor, *Esquire* (September 1993), 26.

27. Kulka, *Kitsch and Art*, 26. Kulka goes on to say, "The aim of kitsch is not to create new needs or expectations, but to satisfy existing ones," 27.

28. Eve K. Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 151.

29. Ibid., 144.

30. Ibid., 156.

31. Ibid., 156. Emphasis in original.

32. Timothy Corrigan, "Werner Schroeter's Operatic Cinema," *Discourse* 3 (1981), 46–59.

33. Ulrike Sieglohr, "Why Drag the Diva into It? Werner Schroeter's Gay Representation of Femininity," in *Triangulated Visions*, ed. Majer O'Sickey and von Zadow, 166. Remarks from the late Karsten Witte are from "Versteckte Zeichen und Signale: Werner Schroeters Filme," *Frankfurter Rundschau* 5, no. 1 (1991), 3.

34. Indiana, "Scattered Pictures," 49.

35. The appearance of *Lohengrin* in *The Great Dictator* warrants comment. Adorno (unconvincingly) argued that after his 1850 opera, "Wagner actually banned authentic historical conflicts from his work" and moved into the phantasmagoria of myth (Theodor Adorno, *In Search of Wagner* [London: New Left Books, 1981], 115). In *Lohengrin*, critics openly ridiculed the medieval aspects of the composer's "Artwork of the Future," suggesting that it already had the status of kitsch in the mid-nineteenth century. Given Charlie Chaplin's abilities as a composer (not to mention his politics), his selection of *Lohengrin* may have been banking on this kitsch, as well as on ironizing the fantasy of mythic Aryan transcendence that Wagner and Hitler later ascribed to it. Yet when the piece reappears at the end of *The Great Dictator* as Chaplin's Jewish character makes his humanistic speech, it seems to aspire to reclaim, for more democratic ends, precisely the same connotations of German spirit and *Volk* upon which National Socialism insisted, undercutting its earlier ironic function. For a critique, see Hillman, "Beethoven, Mahler, and the New German Cinema." Although Hillman doesn't use the term, the second appearance of Wagner is probably kitschier than the first.

36. For another insightful critique of the film's treatment of history and politics, see Stuart Liebman, "If Only Life Were So Beautiful," *Cinéaste* 24, nos. 2/3 (spring/summer 1999): 20–22.

37. J. Hoberman, "Dreaming the Unthinkable," *Sight and Sound* (February 1999), 23.

38. Ironically (and tautologically), the obsession with purity can be considered kitsch.

39. Friedlander, *Reflections of Nazism*, 40.

40. Magdalena Montezuma (born Erika Kluge) was Schroeter's fetish-actress and close companion. She appeared in all but one of his films until her untimely death of cancer in 1984.

41. Thanks to Michelle Lekas for this observation.

42. Claude Davy, "Jamais de la vie," press book on *Idiot's Day* (Paris: Gaumont), 9.

43. Quoted in and translated by Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, 84–85, my emphasis.

44. Cedric Anger, "Les belles manières," *Cahiers du Cinéma*, special issue 68, "Cinéma 68" (1998), 98.

45. Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 44.

46. Unlike Silverman, Schroeter is less concerned with the authority of disembodied female voices than with the materiality of their vocal and emotional expression.

47. Another cross-historical detail of interest is that, despite their different spellings, Schwarzkopf is a distant relative of 1990s American "bomber pilot" General Norman Schwartzkopf.

48. Dorris Dörrie's 1998 *Bin ich Schön / Am I Beautiful?* also explores Germany's fascination with Latin escape; in Schroeter's work, it arguably culminates in *Palermo oder Wolfsburg*, particularly in the protracted courtroom sequence in which a poor young Italian *Gastarbeiter* is tried for the murder of two German youths. Oppositions sustaining this antinomy include north vs. south; cold vs. hot; rationalism vs. passion; order vs. spontaneity; asceticism vs. sensuality; white vs. dark; and so on.

49. The librettists were Viktor Léon and Leo Stein.

50. Loosely translated by Edward Cushing (Brussels: A. Cranz, 1954).

51. Indiana, "Scattered Pictures," 48, 46.

52. Thanks to Dan Cottom for this observation.

53. Santner, *Stranded Objects*, 20.

54. Ibid., 23.

55. Ibid., 22.

56. Ibid., 25.

57. Werner Schroeter, (untitled), in *Kino* (January 1997), 20.

58. Werner Schroeter, "En équilibre," in *Werner Schroeter*, ed. Gérard Courant (Paris: Goethe Institute / Cinémathèque Française, 1982), 14.

59. Broch, "Notes on the Problem of Kitsch," 62–63.

60. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Nietzsche contra Wagner," in *The Portable Nietzsche,* trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Viking Press, 1980), 681, emphasis in the original.

61. Kristeva, *The Black Sun*, 99.

62. Timothy Corrigan, *New German Film: The Displaced Image,* 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 172.

CODA

1. Young, "Germany's Memorial Question," 877.

2. Daniel Libeskind, *Daniel Libeskind: The Space of Encounter* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001), 23.

3. Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory,* 83.

4. George Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 213.

5. Olaf Hoerschelmann, " 'Memoria Dextera Est': Film and Public Memory in Postwar Germany," *Cinema Journal* 40, no. 2 (2001), 78–97.

6. Esther Newton, "Role Models," in *Camp,* ed. Cleto, 107.

7. Theodore Fiedler, "Alexander Kluge: Mediating History and Consciousness," in *New German Filmmakers from Oberhausen Through the 1970s*, ed. Klaus Phillips (New York: Ungar, 1984), 205.

8. Elsaesser, *Fassbinder's Germany,* 106.

9. German film scholars, for instance, have directed their attention away from the New German Cinema to other topics: Nazi cinema, contemporary filmmaking in an ethnically diverse Germany, 1950s *Heimatfilm,* and spectacle-driven revue films. The work in these previously unexplored areas is both politically astute and historically informed. It demonstrates that one needn't work with the imprimatur of the "art film" or the *Autorenfilm* associated with established or "respectable" film movements, like the New German Cinema, to produce sophisticated studies. If these shifts in German film scholarship reinforce a larger movement away from the New German Cinema and what it represents (art cinema, *auteur* cinema, overtly political cinema, anticommercial, naval-gazing cinema), that same evasion suggests, however contradictorily, a nostalgia for the 1970s and early 1980s, the period of greatest activity in both the New German Cinema and its commentators. Why? Perhaps because this was a time marked by what Patrice Petro has called a "community of the question," in which film scholars labored with a certain sense of political camaraderie or aim in their fields (Petro, *Aftershock*). Contemporary film scholarship, like that in German cinema studies, shows how the political or ideological meanings of a film may be entirely redirected through new reading contexts: consider the *Heimatfilm* and contemporary studies of nation formation and transnationalism, or in queer studies, with Kuzniar's *The Queer German Cinema* exemplifying how productive new interpretive and historical contexts can be for films that preceded them.

10. Thomas Elsaesser, *Weimar Germany and After: Germany's Historical Imaginary* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

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